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# LECTURES ON ART

HENRY WHEELER CLAY





46

John & Sophia Rydman  
1880—



LECTURES ON ART.











HENRY WEEKES, R.A.

# LECTURES ON ART,

DELIVERED AT THE ROYAL ACADEMY, LONDON,

BY

HENRY WEEKES, R.A.,

PROFESSOR OF SCULPTURE, AUTHOR OF THE PRIZE TREATISE ON  
THE FINE ARTS SECTION OF THE GREAT  
EXHIBITION OF 1851.

WITH PORTRAIT, A SHORT SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR'S  
LIFE, AND EIGHT SELECTED PHOTOGRAPHS  
OF HIS WORKS.



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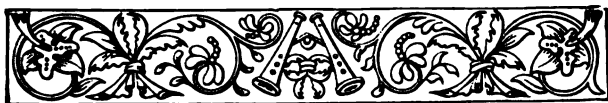


## PREFACE.



THE following lectures are published with a conviction of their merit, for although of necessity somewhat technical, they are written in so familiar a style, that it is believed they will be interesting and instructive to all lovers of Art. It is not presumed that what is here laid down is better than anything hitherto set forth, but it is hoped that, on a subject of such great and growing interest, remarks which are the result of professional study may not be thought unworthy of attention. The volume contains eight illustrations of the author's works, taken from negatives in the possession of Messrs. Negretti and Zambra, and kindly lent by that firm for the purpose. These photographs having no particular bearing on the text, are inserted evenly through the book, in the hope that they may serve, with the accompanying sketch of the artist's life, as a personal reminiscence for his numerous friends and a pleasant interlude for the general reader.





## CONTENTS.

	PAGE
LIFE OF THE AUTHOR . . . . .	I
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	13
LECTURE I.—INTRODUCTORY . . . . .	21
„ II.—COMPOSITION . . . . .	43
„ III.—BEAUTY . . . . .	68
„ IV.—TASTE . . . . .	87
„ V.—STYLE . . . . .	110
„ VI.—IDEALISM AND REALISM IN SCULPTURE . . . . .	134
„ VII.—COLOUR IN SCULPTURE . . . . .	155
„ VIII.—EDUCATION . . . . .	179
„ IX.—PORTRAITURE . . . . .	200
„ X.—SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS. No. I. . . . .	224
„ XI.—SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS. No. II. . . . .	247
„ XII.—SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS. No. III. . . . .	271
„ XIII.—CHANTREY, BEHNES, AND GIBSON . . . . .	294
„ XIV.—THE EARLY HISTORY OF SCULPTURE . . . . .	318
„ XV.—THE EARLY HISTORY OF SCULPTURE. HERO- DOTUS . . . . .	340
„ XVI.—THE EARLY HISTORY OF SCULPTURE. CONTINUA- TION OF HERODOTUS. . . . .	361
„ XVII.—THE EARLY HISTORY OF SCULPTURE. PLINY . . . . .	383
„ XVIII.—THE EARLY HISTORY OF SCULPTURE. THE SCRIP- TURES. . . . .	405






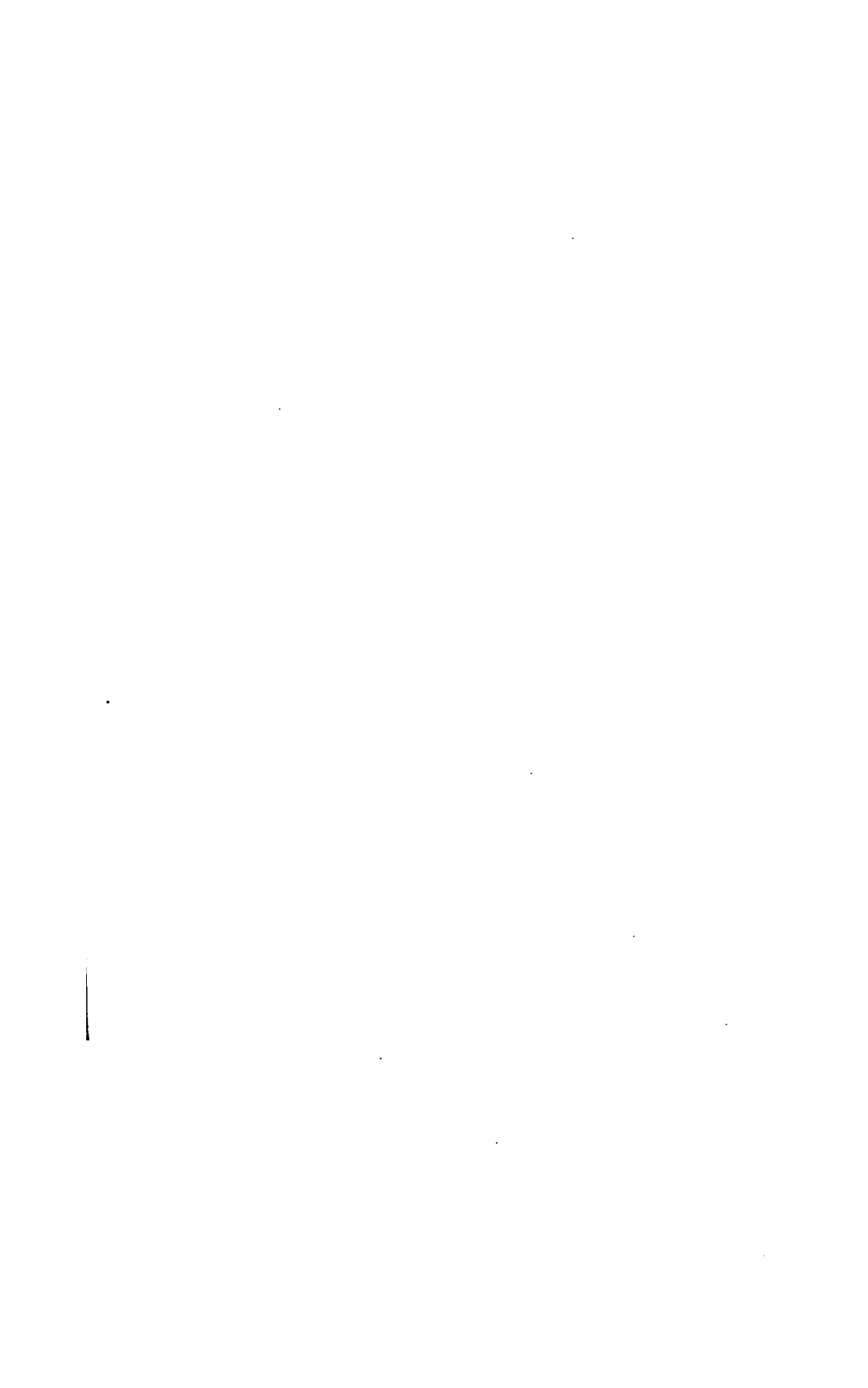




## ILLUSTRATIONS.

	PAGE
 ORTRAIT OF THE AUTHOR . . . . <i>Frontispiece</i>	
STATUE OF JOHN HUNTER . . . . <i>To face page</i>	43
THE MOTHER'S KISS—AN IDEAL WORK . . . .	87
STATUETTE OF CLEOPATRA—AN IDEAL WORK . .	155
STATUE OF LORD AUCKLAND . . . . .	200
STATUE OF THE MARQUIS OF WELLESLEY . . . . .	224
STATUE OF THE RIGHT REV. DANIEL CORRIE, BISHOP OF MADRAS . . . . .	: 294
SARDANAPALUS, KING OF ASSYRIA—AN IDEAL WORK . . . .	361
THE SUPPLIANT—AN IDEAL WORK . . . . .	405







## LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

99



ENRY WEEKES, born at Canterbury in the year 1807, was the only son of Capon Weekes, who for forty years held an appointment in Messrs. Hammond and Furley's Bank in that city. At a very early period the boy gave indications of talent: school-books are still in existence with allegorical designs drawn on the inside of the covers; and play-hours spent by his companions in boyish games were by him devoted to copying any old print or picture he could find in the family cottage.

Weekes was sent by his father to the King's School at Canterbury, where by studious application he gained many distinctions, and also (according to his own account) many black eyes—for he was not a favourite with his schoolfellows, who, after the manner of boys, did not comprehend his retiring, thoughtful ways. He used to say, with some pride, that he never during his school days made use of a "crib," but plodded honestly through his Greek and Latin; so that he came out well at the half-yearly examinations. The cap and gown of the King's scholars, now so familiar to residents in Canterbury, were

adopted in his time ; and he has been heard to relate that the first day he appeared in them he was hooted and pelted so vigorously as to be obliged to take refuge, covered with mud, in a friendly house, and ignominiously slip home after dark : this resentment to novelty, however, quickly subsided, and the scholars were allowed to come and go in peace.

About 1816 his father sent him to France for a time, where he acquired a fair knowledge of the French language—in those days a rare accomplishment—and which in after years proved of great service to the young artist. The boy was about twelve years of age when he attracted much attention by modelling (on an enlarged scale) the St. George and the Dragon from a crown piece. His father, with critical discernment, did his utmost to encourage this evident artistic power ; but limited means threatened at one time to turn the scale against his boy's career. Fortunately, a legacy of £300 from a member of a family to whom services had been rendered enabled him to article his son for five years to Behnes, one of the most eminent portrait-sculptors in England ; thus, at the age of fifteen, he may be said to have made his first start in life. Coming to London, he found himself in the great city with very little money in his pocket ; but with a mind filled with an enthusiastic love for his art, and a fixed determination to succeed. His experiences as a residential pupil were not such as often fall to the lot of young men. Behnes, although an artist of great ability, neglected and lost sight of the object of his pupils' engagements with him. His pecuniary embarrassments were such that his house was constantly without the ordinary necessities, not to say the comforts of life. In addition to this, he imposed upon his pupils many tasks in connection with the work

in his studio, thus occupying time which ought to have been devoted to study. Weekes has often said that he learned more holding a candle for Behnes while modelling than by any actual instruction he received from him. Fortunately, however, the young artist's mind was not of an order to allow opportunities to pass from want of a good example.

In the year 1823 he became a student at the Royal Academy, and was a regular attendant at the evening life-school, gaining on one occasion the silver medal for the best model from the antique; and there is no doubt that at the end of the five years' term he had made rapid strides in his profession, and was fully realizing the promise of his childhood. On quitting the studio of Behnes, the immediate necessity of earning his own living presented itself. Nothing daunted, Weekes shouldered his tools, and proceeded to make the round of the studios, in order to obtain work as a carver with any of the celebrities of the period. Fortune favoured him at the first effort.

Early in the year 1827 he found himself at the back door of Sir Francis Chantrey's studio in Eccleston Street, Pimlico—who was then in the zenith of his successful career—and sent in his name as an applicant for work. While waiting a reply, there occurred an incident which, though trivial in itself, might be called curious. One of the workmen, a stone-cutter, amused himself by jokingly inquiring of the young candidate, whether "he had come to buy up the whole place;" a remark singularly verified some years afterwards, when this same stone-cutter worked under and received wages from the subject of his good humour. After introducing himself to Sir Francis, his services were accepted; this was a cause of great satisfaction, as it enabled him to become independent of his father, and in some

measure to repay him for the very great efforts he had made for his advancement. Once in the studio of Sir Francis, he felt he had obtained a wide field for his energies, and an opportunity for developing the talent he possessed. Chantrey soon perceived the ability of his young modeller, who rose high in his esteem, both on account of his skill and industry. Commissions accumulated rapidly, and many friendly acts proved his appreciation of his assistant's talent, among them the important gift of a residence with a small studio attached, adjoining his own. There Weekes worked on his own account, often till the small hours of morning, executing commissions which even at this period were obtained. This early success was a source of pride and satisfaction to the good father to whose discernment and faith in his son's genius it was in some degree due. He had turned a deaf ear to the remonstrances of friends and advisers, who considered his allowing the boy to follow Art as an occupation "a mad scheme." Those who have limited incomes will readily understand the self-denial and difficulty there must be in educating a son for a profession, when the return for pecuniary outlay must necessarily be far distant; but the father had his reward, for he lived to see his hope realized, and "the child" prove "father to the man" who, in his turn, revered his parent, and always spoke of him with grateful feeling for the many sacrifices which had been cheerfully made for his advantage. Weekes's first public work was a sundial placed on the Dane John at Canterbury, for which the citizens of that place subscribed £250. It is much to be regretted that, owing to neglect, and probably its exposed position, it is now a mere wreck. This was followed by a bust of the late Lord Harris, a fortunate subject for so young an artist.

In 1830 he was threatened with a great calamity. While taking a posthumous mask, he unfortunately became inoculated with poisonous matter; his eyesight in consequence was despaired of for many weeks, and his health for some time generally impaired: thanks, however, to a robust constitution, and his previous abstemious habits, his recovery was not long delayed, the only evil result being a slight weakness in one eye, which lasted for many years, but without seriously affecting his comfort.

In 1837 Weekes was honoured by a command from the Queen to execute a bust of Her Majesty in marble, to be presented to H.R.H. the Duchess of Kent as a birthday gift. This was the first portrait of Her Majesty taken after her accession to the throne. On the death of Sir Francis, in 1841, his will disclosed a further proof of the esteem with which he regarded his assistant, by a legacy of £1,000, and a special request to his executors that "Henry Weekes should be allowed to complete his unfinished works." By means of this munificent bequest and a further sum borrowed on mortgage, he succeeded in purchasing Chantrey's studio, with the adjoining property, and so placed himself at once before the public as his late employer's successor.

In this position he had no cause to complain of want of patronage, the first commission being the marble statue of the Right Rev. Daniel Corrie, Bishop of Madras, for St. George's Church, Madras; followed by that of the Marquis of Wellesley, for the East India Company.

Among the chief works of this period of his career are those of Dr. Goodall at Eton; Lord Bacon, for Trinity College, Cambridge; the Earl of Auckland, for Calcutta; and General Sir Edward Barnes, for Bombay.



In 1850 was exhibited the first of those ideal works which, while affording him an opportunity for displaying his power of realizing the beauties of outward form, appeal most directly to poetic conceptions of Art. The Suppliant, representing a mother with her child seeking help, added much to the fame of the artist, and eventually led to his election in 1851 as an Associate of the Royal Academy. His reputation, however, rests principally on his portrait-busts. These are too numerous to record, but amongst the many may be mentioned those of the late Duke of Marlborough, Professor Sedgewick, Sir Cornwall Lewis, His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury, Sir Roderick Murchison, Professor Green, Henry Toby Prinsep, Sir Benjamin Brodie, Charles Buller, Lord Hammond, and Sir Moses Montefiore. In this branch of Art he possessed the happy faculty of drawing out the mind of his sitter, and thus stamping on the features that truthfulness of character and delicacy of expression essential to good portraiture.

About the year 1852, Sir Percy Florence Shelley, Bart., intrusted him with the execution of a posthumous bust of his mother, Mrs. Shelley. This gave rise to a friendship with Sir Percy and Lady Shelley, to which he always alluded as one of the most pleasant experiences of his life. The munificence of the poet's son enabled him shortly afterwards to engage in an ideal work in which he strongly sympathized—a monument to Shelley and Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, for Christ Church, Hampshire. This is considered by many as decidedly his finest production. An intense admirer of the poet, the sculptor seems to have thrown his whole genius into the subject: the touching attitude, the deep and unaffected grief of the group, is most effective, while its powerful composition and simplicity

seem to strike the sweetest chord in the gentle poet's life. Owing to the prejudices of the churchwardens and others to the unorthodox opinions of Shelley, difficulty was experienced in obtaining a fitting site in the church: a compromise was arrived at by the artist consenting to remove the work at his own expense if it should be disapproved by the congregation, and the monument is now one of the Art treasures of the county. This was followed, in 1857-8, by *The Mother's Kiss*, a picture of natural affection, carried out with much feeling and delicate treatment; and *The Young Naturalist*, an elegant figure of a girl standing amidst the rocks and seaweed on the seashore, and holding a star-fish in her hand: the artistic idea aimed at in the latter statue will be best described in the artist's own words:—

“Where end the searchings of her wondering mind?  
Where most begin and all must end at last,  
Simple or Sage, Philosopher or Fool:  
He who with deep-laid thought in vain essays  
By finite means the infinite to probe;  
And he who more contented waits that time,  
When, falling to earth and bursting with decay,  
This mortal husk gives forth at one bright shoot  
The promised tree of knowledge and of life:  
Where wind up all the workings of their brain?  
Where, but with this poor child upon the shore,  
Who by more easy paths arrives at once  
At the one truth that nothing can be known.”

The *Sardanapalus* executed for the civic authorities in 1861 may be cited as a bolder type of poetic conception; and the statue of John Hunter, for the Museum of the College of Surgeons, a later work, a fitting example of dignity and thought in portraiture.

In 1863 Henry Weekes was elected to the full honours of the Royal Academy, and as a member of the Council took an active part in advancing all measures tending to improve education in Art. He considered Sculpture to be insufficiently recognized as a distinct Art in the schools, and endeavoured to obtain for the student modellers a better method of studying under proper instruction from members of their own particular branch; at the same time, strongly suggested a larger expenditure under this head on the part of the Academy, and deprecated any movement of economy in a body which he considered rich enough, and sufficiently well established, to benefit in a greater degree all grades of Art in this country. Acting on this idea, he came forward in 1869 as candidate for the Professorship of Sculpture, previously held by Westmacott: an election took place, which resulted in his appointment. This event decided him at once to go to Italy, and acquaint himself with the celebrated sculptures of antiquity, so that he might write and speak with the authority of personal experience and observation. A previous journey through France, Holland, and Belgium had given him an intimate knowledge of the Dutch and Flemish schools. He returned from Italy deeply impressed by the grandeur and beauty he had seen, but not so enthusiastic as many, who, carried away by the idea that all antique work is perfect, condemn as worthless much that is admirable in modern Art. At the end of the first term of his Professorship (five years) he was re-elected without opposition, and again visited Rome, taking Venice on his return. This journey was undertaken for the express purpose of gaining fresh material for his discourses, and so avoiding, as much as possible, repetition.

Previous to this pleasure trip, he had completed his group for the Albert Memorial, entitled "Manufactures," and undertaken a commission for a full-length recumbent figure of Dr. Sumner, late Bishop of Winchester, for Winchester Cathedral, which may be considered his last important work.

There is no doubt that on his second return from Italy the fatal malady from which he had suffered for many years began to undermine his strength and energy ; indeed, from that time his public duties were only carried out by a determined mind overcoming much physical suffering.

In 1876 all idea was relinquished of executing any more commissions, and he retired for some time to Ramsgate, the pure air of the east coast being recommended as likely in some degree to restore his shattered health. There he met with much single-hearted kindness from Sir Moses Montefiore, who, on all occasions, was most indefatigable in cheering him with his society, and among many acts of courteous consideration sat to him for his own bust, thus affording the artist an excellent subject and a means of passing the time in a light and pleasant manner. His fast-failing powers induced him, in the beginning of the year 1877, to return home, and from that time he was confined to his room, and bore with fortitude and resignation the sufferings which, on the 28th of May, brought to a close, at the age of seventy, a life, uneventful perhaps, but clearly indicating the result of that rare mental combination, fixity of purpose with a well-balanced, yet poetic mind. By his death English Art has lost one of her most devoted and conscientious students.

Henry Weekes was about the middle height, his head large, the forehead high and square, features rugged and irregular, but

thoughtful and expressive. Upright and true in thought, word, and deed, he expressed his opinions fearlessly and with decision on all subjects within the scope of his experience; while his simple, kindly manner, remarkable powers of conversation, and freshness of idea gave a charm to his society, rare as it was delightful. Merit alone was a sufficient pass to his friendship, securing at all times a hearty welcome to those who sought it, and ready assistance to young students struggling to tread in his footsteps. When the reward of a studious, practical life had placed him in the foremost rank among English artists, he used his influence in endeavouring to inspire others with the same love and respect for the true worth and lofty aims of Art. His writings show an earnest desire to raise the tone of the English school. He saw with great regret the utter absence of knowledge and consequent want of appreciation among the masses; but he never lost hope that the time would come when proper instruction would produce a more general recognition of the beauty and ennobling power of true Art.

His discernment of genius in the young students was in most cases singularly exemplified by their success in after years. Brought much into contact with them at the Royal Academy Schools and other places, he was a general favourite, bearing in mind—

“How hard it is to climb  
The hill, where Fame’s proud temple shines afar.”

A kindly word of encouragement here and there, and an error or two pointed out quietly and judiciously, did more good, perhaps, among the light-hearted students than many lectures. He made a principle of the old saying, “Know thyself,” con-

sequently, was fully aware of his own failures ; and, like most artists of ability, he could never carry out his ideas to his own satisfaction.

Although at times thrown back by the disappointments and the usual vicissitudes of an anxious calling, he had sufficient cause to realize—

“ What a glory doth this world put on  
For him who, with a fervent heart, goes forth  
Under the bright and glorious sky, and looks  
On duties well performed and days well spent !  
For him the wind, ay, and the yellow leaves,  
Shall have a voice, and give him eloquent teachings.  
He shall so hear the solemn hymn that Death  
Has lifted up for all, that he shall go  
To his long resting-place without a tear.”

A few days before his end, he expressed himself as contented with his career, and thankful for all the blessings he had experienced during his lifetime. The sculptor of the statue of John Hunter and the Shelley monument has, by those works alone, secured a living reputation, and a name of which his family is justly proud.

J. E. W.







## INTRODUCTION.

### THE ORIGIN OF THE FINE ARTS—THEIR VALUE AS HELPING TO PROMOTE CIVILIZATION.

**N**O great progress can be made in civilization without some attention to the Fine Arts ; for the natural love of the beautiful, and the intuitive feeling for imitation which Providence has planted within us, will, sooner or later, evolve itself in one or other of the different callings connected with them.

As man emerges from the simple state of barbarism, and enters into the more complicated one of educated life, things that tend to gratify the eye, to ornament the abode or person, to mark distinction of rank, or possession of power or wealth, become almost as much positive requisites as are the mere necessities of life to the unsophisticated savage. As nations advance, labour and enterprise create wealth, and society becomes in consequence more artificial and intricate in its phases, employments more numerous and varied, customs and manners more costly and refined. By the wealth thus gained, man seeks to surround himself with luxuries of all kinds ; every sense or feeling with which he is gifted must not only be gratified, but its power, as far as possible, increased ; the ear must be regaled



by more delicious sounds, the eye by more pleasing forms ; that which was previously constructed solely for use, has to be made ornamental in its shape, agreeable in its appearance, as well as appropriate to its purpose.

In this love of imitation, and desire to impress all around us with beauty, lies perhaps the germ from whence the Fine Arts have sprung ; but by degrees they have been found to possess a greater purpose than the simple gratification of the eye : to contain a language which, by appealing to our natural sympathies or religious impressions, and connecting itself with our historical recollections, or our poetical imaginings, serves to raise us both morally and intellectually, as well as to soften down the asperities of our character, and increase our enjoyment ; and hence their value.

To the real lover of the Arts their power over the mind is so self-evident, that the admitting their worth as a means of civilization seems but assenting to a truism : it is nevertheless a curious fact that few nations, whether ancient or modern, have paid less attention to them than the English ; and that even now, when we have at length roused ourselves into something like a consideration or love for them, and are endeavouring to attract public notice towards them by the formation of public galleries and the establishment of Government schools, men yet exist, eminent in science and literature, sincere and upright in all their thoughts and words—in fact, leaders in society, whom the world justly respects—who not only are indifferent to them, but who openly assert that the cultivation of the Fine Arts tends in no way to ameliorate mankind ; that, on the contrary, it is often the means of debilitating them, by lending to their vices and luxuries a gilded covering that renders them more attractive.

Their argument is based on examples, found in history, of rulers who, while they have been the most liberal patrons of Painting and Sculpture, have shown themselves tainted with the grossest crimes, as in the instance of Leo X.; or on times when, while the Arts have flourished, nations have otherwise been fettered both mentally and physically.

It is urged, and with truth, that the most impure religions have been those that have most aided in the advance of the Arts; and that those creeds or religions have found in them a powerful instrument whereby to instil false doctrines into the minds of the ignorant. Grant that the Arts have been in former days subservient to these purposes, and that, while lending themselves to the aid of superstition, they received in return an encouragement which brought them to their greatest height, does it follow that they are to be accused of fostering the imperfections of mankind? As well might Literature, whose birth was perhaps even earlier than that of Art, and which was certainly united with it, be said to have debased humanity. Art was then but the slave to the feelings and opinions of the time; and as such was more or less obliged to lend itself to the task imposed upon it, whatever that might be. It was but the reflector and promulgator of the knowledge it found around it. In its earliest times, when connected with pagan history and religion, it was neither the founder of the creeds, nor did its influence tend to strengthen or increase their impurity; on the contrary, we shall find that it was the means of bringing forward those features or points out of which good arose, and of rendering the vile parts less effective in their operation.

Take, for instance, the Greeks, under whom the Arts may be said to have first risen from a mechanical employment into an

intellectual pursuit ; and whose system of theology was but a deification of the different feelings and attributes of humanity ; whose gods were emblems, not merely of the virtues, but of the vices of their worshippers. Did Architecture or Sculpture, the two Arts in which they most excelled, make their habits more immoral, or the poetical allegories of their Pantheon more debasing ? It is true that that nation, by throwing the halo of religious worship over certain vices, removed from them the odium of the public voice ; and that the Arts, in some instances, were called in to assist in making their debauched ceremonies more inviting ; but this formed only an exception to the general rule ; and it may be even there a question, whether they did not tend rather to soften the grossness of, than heighten the zest for the impurities.

The remains of ancient Art which have come down to us show clearly, notwithstanding here and there an example to the contrary, that the intent and purport of the artists was to raise the populace intellectually, to excite them to deeds of patriotism and valour, and to love of the noble and heroic. The contention of Neptune and Minerva which should most benefit mankind, the labours of Hercules, the maternal affection of Niobe, are subjects the contemplation of which must elevate the character of a people, and are alone sufficient to prove that the value of the Arts, as a means of advancement, was both understood and appreciated. The lesson, too, which Art conveys by portraying heroic virtue, was increased in force by showing the opposite side of the page ; vice was exhibited, as in the instance of their Silenus and Satyrs, in its most natural, as well as most expressive and abhorrent forms. Men were taught, while looking at them, that by the practice of vicious habits

they lowered themselves to an equality with the beasts of the field, connected themselves with them, both in form and character assumed, essentially, if not positively, the likeness of inferior creation.

We might go further in our argument for the well-working of Art in ancient Greece ; we might descend from the beautiful fables under which her moral code of laws was veiled, and ask the reader to remember that the statues of her warriors and heroes, her poets, orators, and philosophers, erected in such numbers in her public places—their forms idealized while their names were deified, to meet the belief that the beautiful in person was indicative of the noble in mind—served to raise in the beholders a spirit of emulation, a desire to obtain the like honours by the like means.

The same feeling pervaded Roman Art ; courage in war was instilled into the people by the figures of their generals ; bodily energy and activity by the statues of the victors in the games ; Roman stoicism by the suppressed agony of the dying gladiator.

In the mediæval—or, as they are called, the dark ages—when Art revived, and became again the handmaid to religion—the cause which has always been her best nurse—can it be said to have obstructed the advance of civilization ? nay, can it be denied that it was a powerful medium of imparting knowledge, both religious and moral ? Called in by the early Christians as an assistant to their worship, it became with them a visible link between their prayers and the invisible throne to which they were addressed, that concentrated their thoughts, helped their imagination, and heightened the enthusiasm of their devotion. It was, it is true, afterwards perverted by priestcraft from this

purpose, and instead of an assistant to devotional feeling, and an instructor in Christian knowledge, it was itself made the object of idolatry; but this cannot be said to have been the fault of Art, but of those who abused God's gifts by working evil out of good. We are apt, too, while dwelling on the superstitions which crept into Christianity under the dominion of the Roman Catholics, when Art flourished so luxuriantly, to forget that with this evil much good also arose; if the Paintings and Sculptures belonging to that Church tended to propagate the fallacies of priestcraft, it must be acknowledged that they propagated also much of the true history and Gospel of Christ; and now that we have printing to help us to spread knowledge, we are apt to underrate the effect they had, in the days previous to that invention, in educating the people. We should recollect that they formed almost the only medium in the early ages through which glimpses of holy or profane history could be caught by the vulgar; that it was through them, if not wholly, at any rate in a great measure, that religion was taught, and its doctrines impressed on the mind.

Had Art been the originator, or even the chief promoter, of the evils hinted at, they would have been found to grow with its growth, and to have fallen with its decay; instead of which we find them existing the strongest at times when Art was in its infancy; and rather weakened than otherwise in those days when it attained its highest point of excellence. Reason has, however, now so firmly established her throne amongst us, that there can be no further danger of the Arts being again perverted to the wrong purposes they formerly were; and they who differ from, as well as they who assent to the religion under which the great works of ancient days were produced, may now look

upon them without the slightest danger of being led backward in their judgment by the associations with which they are connected, or by the thoughts which they suggest to the imagination: and it may be fairly asked if, now that time has cleared away the filth which had accumulated around them, they are not found to possess much that may yet serve to direct us in the course we would wish to pursue.

Rejecting, however, for the sake of argument, the Fine Arts as a means of moral and intellectual improvement, and admitting them merely as a study by which forms and colours are made the more to gratify the eye, their value may yet be urged as tending to multiply our enjoyments. By a proper understanding and thorough appreciation of what is termed taste, works of comparatively little manual labour are made to convey purer and more exquisitely refined pleasure than others upon which years of toil have been bestowed, but in which that quality is wanting. That there are principles by which taste is guided, and by which the essentially sublime or beautiful may be distinguished from the merely strange or fanciful, no one who has at all studied the arrangements of Nature can deny; and it may with justice be contended, that in endeavouring to search into those principles, and in promulgating them, we are but carrying out the intention of Providence, who, while He has made all things suited to their purpose, has at the same time made them agreeable to look upon, and has given us, not only a sense of enjoyment from beholding them, but also an intellect to understand the system by which this double purpose of utility and beauty is accomplished.





## LECTURE I.

### INTRODUCTORY.

**T**HE law laid down by the Royal Academy to the lecturer on Sculpture is, that he shall explain the principles of style and form in the Art, and its peculiarities of composition; and he is very properly restricted, in common with the other professors, from any comment on the opinions or productions of living artists. These simple, and at the same time excellent rules, it is scarcely necessary to observe, I purpose thoroughly adhering to. I trust, however, to be able, without infringing in the least, even on the last admirable clause, to point out in this, my first lecture—intended merely as an introductory one—certain influences which surround at the present moment the Art itself, and tend to direct its style, as well as the purposes to which it is applied, thinking as I do it may not be amiss that the student should, even in the beginning of his career, thoroughly understand them. I shall have to speak of matters connected indirectly, rather than directly, with the Art. A lecturer on Sculpture, depending as he does for success partly on judg-



ment, and partly on imagination, can hardly be expected to lay down rules or expound principles with the same definite precision as one who has to speak of the laws of an exact science, where cause and effect are more clearly and decidedly traceable to each other. Laws in the Fine Arts should in fact at all times be dealt with liberally—should be looked upon, not as objects for over-strict observance, but simply as cautions to those who are rich in genius, while at the same time they supply proper and wholesome restraints upon those who are but poor in that respect. In this particular it may perhaps be said that they differ in no very great degree from laws on other questions with which we have to do in our general career of life. Be that as it may, it is certain that in Art a too great dependence on, or a too close adhesion to them tends often quite as much to weaken as to strengthen the merits of an artist.

The student should look upon them as does the skater on the notices put up for his safety on the ice, which say to him, thus far shalt thou go and no further; but within the limits left to you, you may cut what figures you please. A lecturer, too, labours under this difficulty. There is an opinion prevalent among professional men that writers or preachers on Art are generally those who know the least about it. This is not altogether a prejudice, nor altogether founded on fact; but it would be difficult to sustain such an argument when we recollect Reynolds, Eastlake, and Leslie, and many others almost as eminent, as writers on Painting, and Flaxman on Sculpture: at the same time it is quite true that there are men who, feeling that they have little or no chance of gaining a reputation by their works, hope to obtain one by writing or

talking on that which they cannot carry out, and so impressing the world with a sense of their learning and theoretical knowledge; forgetting that in Art at least, whatever may be done in other things, theory and practice can never be entirely separated. These are the men who put forth difficult problems for solution, and try to make an Art appear complicated and difficult to comprehend whose very essence is its simplicity; and hence the little value that has of late been placed on theoretical talkers. On the other hand, there are sculptors who do not write or speak of their profession, though fully understanding it both in theory and practice; but who are so engaged with their works as to have no time for putting their ideas together—hardly, indeed, time for defining them clearly to themselves. These, in consequence, rarely devote themselves to expounding in words what they can so much better illustrate by their models; though it might be as well, even for themselves, if they occasionally did so. Ideas placed side by side on paper enable the sculptor to view clearly their bearing one upon another, and he thereby knows at once, or at least better ascertains, what are true and what are false; and he arrives also at a more accurate notion of the extent of his knowledge of his Art, theoretically as well as practically. I will venture to recommend to the student the practice of putting down his thoughts in writing, if it be only for this reason—it will serve him as a species of self-examination, that will, if fairly and honestly done, save him from many besetting sins, especially that one to which we are all so liable, the bending of theory to practice, rather than practice to theory. It will serve him, too, as a defence for his Art against the many temptations—and their name is legion—that arise from without, from the momentary

prevailing whims or fashions of the day. I have said that Sculpture is a simple Art, perhaps I shall be better understood if I say that it is a restricted one—restricted in its means and its effects. If I define it as the Art of expressing ideas by means of form, I know I shall be uttering something very like a truism ; but you will have, within this simple definition the Alpha and Omega of all its rules. But, simple as it is, it involves much more than at first appears. It involves the sculptor going with his Art into those pure forms of Nature herself, which are at all times more or less expressive of her purpose ; and it involves his rejection of many artificial ones which fail in this characteristic. It involves, too, the rejection of such as depend for their power on colour, as well as of many means, such as aerial, and I may almost say linear perspective, both of which the painter has at his command. I have said that Sculpture is a restricted Art ; I will repeat it, because I know it is the fashion at this moment to take this as a reason for looking down upon it as an inferior one—an assertion hardly worthy of a denial. It is forgotten that it is this very restriction that protects it from the many degradations in style to which the sister Art is liable, and that confines it to the higher walks, and keeps it comparatively pure and true to its text. To say that Painting has risen to the highest style in a country is simply to assert that it has approached nearer to that of Sculpture ; that it is resorting to the strict rules of composition, to purity of form, to scientific knowledge of the human figure, and to expression ; in short, to the very few things that Sculpture has to feed upon. I am not saying that the two Arts may not owe something to each other, but they can never amalgamate ; for they have necessarily, for their own preservation, distinctions of feeling : but were a treaty

of commerce to be established between them, I believe Painting would be much more a gainer by it than Sculpture.

Painting, however, is with us naturally and necessarily the prevailing Art of the two, and the consequence is, that its influence is more felt on our Sculpture than is the influence of Sculpture on our Painting. I think I shall best show this by a comparison of the circumstances under which modern Sculpture has to work with what it had under the ancient Greeks—the nation who may be said to be the representatives of antique Sculpture, inasmuch as they carried it to the highest pitch of excellence. Let us compare the two from this point : it is ever well to look truth in the face, though it may not help to flatter our prejudices or to enlarge our prospects of success. My object, however, is not to discourage, but rather to direct your course of study.

First then, the Greeks had, at the time Art flourished with them, no public Press. Do not think that in claiming this as a cause of their greater success I am silly enough to enter into a discussion on the criticisms now passed on our productions ; quite the contrary, here I have nothing whatever to do with them : what I wish to convey to you is, that in the Art of Printing the world has discovered more powerful means of disseminating, not only general knowledge, but those principles of taste, and that feeling for the pure and beautiful, which, previously, it was the province of Art, almost alone, to inculcate. In modern times Sculpture must, I fear, in consequence abdicate, in a great measure, if not wholly, her title to be a teacher, and be contented with the rank of illustrator ; whilst of old it was, if not the only one, at any rate one of the chief means of instructing the masses in that refinement for which,

amidst what we should now call comparative ignorance, Art-loving Athens in particular was so distinguished. Need I remind you how it stood in her temples and in her public places, accustoming the eye to the contemplation of the beautiful, and imbuing with the love of it a people, themselves examples of the highest and most beautiful race of mankind, and believers in a creed that held physical beauty to be ever more or less united with, or indicative of, moral and intellectual excellence? In attributing to our Art the important office of teacher in ancient Greece, I am of course quite willing to acknowledge the equal, if not more powerful aid of her poetry, dramatic or otherwise, of her public oratory, and schools of philosophy; the latter especially. There seems, in fact, the same searching after abstract truth in the works of Plato as is found in ancient Greek Art, so much so that his name has become synonymous with purity, a word which expresses better than any other the characteristic quality of antique Sculpture. Art was with these, and they with Art, and all were so bound together in their religion that, while each did its part in the one whole, it would be difficult to say which tended most to the advancement of taste or the civilization of mankind. Springing from the same love and belief in the beautiful, they worked together, alike in their simplicity of style and in their end and aim, and were all equally restricted in their means of spreading ideas. The poetry of Greece appears to me as if it could only belong to a nation great in the Art of Sculpture.

The impersonations of the "Iliad" and "Odyssey," the heroes of the terrible tragedies of Æschylus and Euripides, and the awful figure of the self-blinded Œdipus of Sophocles, stand out so distinctly from one another, that they seem each a statue in him-

self, whether represented on their primitive stage, with the simple attendance of a chorus, or when carved in marble, with their appropriate accessories to explain their meaning and character. The superiority of the early Greeks in their dresses, never as in modern days driven by the whims and fancies of fashion from the true principles of beauty, and always allowing the just proportions and natural actions of the human frame to be visible to the eye ; their innate love of glory ; their athletic games, and the comparative simplicity of their mode of warfare, which depended on personal courage more than now, and so admitted better of sculptural representation and commemoration, have all been argued, with justice, to be causes of their superiority in Sculpture. I need not, therefore, descant on them at present, but I have laid stress on their religion, because I think religion has been, and ever will be, the greatest mover and elevator of Fine Art, and more especially of the Art of Sculpture. Now if you agree with me on this point, I fear you will be compelled—seeing, as you must, that we have lost in a great measure that influence—to attribute to that loss the changes, whether for better or worse, that have taken place in more recent days, and the want of that elevated character which so distinguishes later productions from the best antique ones. Art may be described to be with us in a state of transition, perhaps it can hardly be said to be ever otherwise ; but I believe I may say in England its end and aim are not well defined, at least as regards Sculpture ; and that consequently our school is vibrating between one extreme and the other, hardly knowing exactly where is the proper balance of equilibrium. In evidence of this we see works showing great talent—nay, almost genius, and yet quite unfit for the Art to which they belong ; designs which, if

painted, might have formed the first step on the ladder of reputation, but which in Sculpture, to say the least, are out of place, because they are in direct contradiction of her unvarying principles, or, in other words, out of her natural limits. These examples become more pernicious from their possessing otherwise no inconsiderable excellence, and I confess I see more danger to the Art from this than from any other source. Painting and Sculpture have always a tendency to go hand in hand together; but it is equally necessary for the well-being of both that each should strictly observe, not only the laws which are common to the two, but also those which serve to regulate the distinctions one from another.

With the old nations, it may, I think, be fairly stated that Sculpture took the lead. We have but few remains of either antique Greek or Roman Painting; but what we have indicates it as secondary in importance, and shows it partook much of the feeling of its sister Art, and that both worked together to convey to the multitude the same solemn and impressive ideas. They were both employed almost wholly by the same severe mistresses, Religion and Philosophy, and were each too high and pure in themselves to contaminate one another. The same may be said of the revival of Art in Italy, except that in the latter case, Painting stood at least upon an equal footing with Sculpture. In our own days, and perhaps more particularly with us at home, Painting has taken the decided lead. It is but natural she should do so; her works are more suited to the times, and can be produced at a cost more adapted to the enormous increase in the value of labour. There are other reasons, which I need not go into, that have given her the advantage. That Painting has made rapid advances of late, no

unprejudiced observer will, I think, deny, and the danger is of Sculpture bending the severity of her style to that of her younger and more popular sister, in order to gain a share of her popularity.

Painting is no longer the severe Art it was in the best days of ancient Greece and Rome and mediæval Italy: she has stepped down from her lofty throne to become, perhaps, more entertaining, more amiable, more generally interesting. With us she may be said to be tending towards the realistic, or, at any rate, to be working between it and the ideal. I do not myself feel, as many do, that this is altogether a disadvantage. That, however, is not the question I am called upon to discuss. My province is to warn the student in Sculpture that his Art cannot, has not even the means of following Painting in all these grades. The legitimate ramifications through which she does descend are different from those of Painting. The high walks of both are of course in the regions of poetry and history, sacred and profane. Sculpture may embrace portraiture, and again go down into decorative and ornamental Art, and so unite herself with manufactures. But she cannot take within her grasp, as Painting does, the familiar and domestic, nor condescend to the absurd and grotesque—at least, not without a loss of self-respect fatal to her position and calling. With the Egyptians it formed, in connection with Architecture, a record of their history, and resolved itself into a series of national portraiture, accompanied by symbols illustrative of the events of the period; as it did, indeed, often with the Greeks when in unison with their monumental inscriptions, the grand difference being that with the former people we have at the most but an abstract of the national character, and often



positive individuality; whilst, with the latter, we have an abstract of the beautiful, derived from the study of mankind in general, and not belonging to any particular type or race. It can hardly be denied that the pagan mythology of the Greeks—which consisted of a separate deification of the human passions or characteristics, and insisted that, in the personification of them, an appropriate expression should be given, without loss of beauty—it cannot be denied, I say, that such a religion was, for the purpose of Art, vastly superior to the Christian belief, even in the days when that belief grew into so luxurious a state, and resorted in so magnificent a manner to Art in aid of its devotion. It stands, in fact, to reason, that a people who personified their deities by sculptural representations of perfect human beauty must carry an Art depending for its excellence on that beauty to a higher pitch than a people with a religion like our own, which, though wonderfully superior in all important points, looks upon the Godhead as hardly capable of being conceived, much less represented to the eye, and which does not lay claim to personal attractions in any of its leaders or advocates; hardly in the Divine head that links our humanity with its Creator. It is to this cause, I confess, that I attribute a certain inferiority in Christian Sculpture, not excepting the Art of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, which Michael Angelo carried to such a height. That Sculpture then rose from the dead under its great leader, must be admitted, and that it rose with new attributes, with a grandeur and gorgeousness of conception quite its own, and quite distinct from the pure unobtrusive simplicity of old Greek Art. For this, however, its new attributes of splendour and magnificence can hardly, in my opinion, be considered as a

fair and sufficient substitute, though the change of one quality for another may, I should say, be fairly assigned to a change in the feelings and circumstances of the times.

The old classic sculptors never departed from their one principle, Beauty ; but the mediæval ones had, in many instances, to convey in their Art much that must tend to deteriorate from the excellence of the human form. They had frequently to portray the effects of mental and bodily suffering, their creed itself consisting, speaking broadly, of an abnegation of self for the benefit of others. I do not stand before you to preach on the differences of religion ; I have only to show you the various effects they have, and have had, on the Art of Sculpture ; and looking at the two great distinctions I have endeavoured thus shortly to put before you, you will not, I presume, differ from me as to the superiority of the old pagans, who, even when representing by symbols their vices, gross as they were, never forgot the one keystone of the Art, Beauty. Even the aid which the religion of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries gave to Art you have not, nor can you reasonably expect to have now. Some things indeed of the present day, to which I am compelled to allow an equality, if not a precedence, may be argued to be to a certain extent antagonistic to its full development in modern times. Science, for instance, which is making such rapid strides, and which, as far as our purpose is concerned, may be described as a building of one fact upon another for the discovery of still further facts, naturally trains the minds of those who devote themselves to it to accept of nothing in their researches that can be understood by imagination ; the only word in their dictionary coming at all near to it, and that not very near, being experiment. This creates, in a country like our own, a

numerous and most influential class of men, with judgment strong from its being constantly exercised, and with little imagination, because that faculty is rarely called into play, and they are consequently but little disposed to enjoy or feel the beauties of an Art depending greatly on that imagination for its charms, and whose beneficial qualities are not so direct as those of their own pursuits. Sculpture, in fact Art generally, must take its place in a more complicated state of society, with other things more or less valuable.

Perhaps I am dwelling on this too long, but I wish the student clearly to see that he can hardly hope to bring back again an age of Sculpture similar to that of ancient Greece or Rome or even to that of mediæval Italy. The sculptor must endeavour to adapt his work to the circumstances and feelings of the period in which he lives, and this, I firmly believe, may be done without any degradation of style or treatment.

In asking the public to become admirers of illustrations in Art in which only the most learned feel an interest, and that a secondary one, is asking an impossibility. Sculpture, from its very nature, can never perhaps become exactly popular; but it need not hold itself aloof from its admirers, and expect to be courted without any return, or while affecting a coy avoidance of their tastes and feelings. It admits only of subjects of a high character, but it has an ample choice of such in the sacred writings with which our religious feelings are connected, and in the history and poetry of our country. Evidence of the inexpediency of choosing subjects of a pagan character for Sculpture may be shown from the preface to Bulwer's novel of "The Last Days of Pompeii:" it does not seem quite the sort of book to quote from, but you will recollect it is the work of a classical

scholar ; the remark, too, he makes appears to me to the purpose. He says, " The greatest difficulty in treating of an unfamiliar and distant period is to make the characters introduced live and move before the eye of the reader." He is speaking, of course, of the difficulties in Literature, and I think I am not taking too much upon myself in saying that the words "live and move before the eyes of the reader" may be translated to mean the having that association with our own feelings necessary to create a due and proper sympathy within us. The same difficulty exists in Art as well as in Literature, perhaps in a greater degree, for a reason which I will explain. We have not the liberty of introducing things which may connect the work with our every-day life, because our effect has to be produced at once by one scene or representation—to be accomplished, so to speak, by one stroke of the pencil or chisel—and the contact between the sublime and the commonplace, the ideal and the realistic, would be too close. In Literature, where the author arrives at his purpose by many strokes of his pen, and through a series of scenes, he may have that aid, may make use of both the ideal and the real, and may resort to contrast between the two to strengthen his effect ; but he never brings them into immediate proximity, as the sculptor would be obliged to do were he to resort to the same system. In the sublime tragedy of " Macbeth " there are passages, never perhaps given on the stage, nor in fact hardly fit to be so given, which bring us back to our earth, Antæus-like to rebound with renewed strength and energy into the regions of imagination. And in the poetical drama of " The Tempest " we have Trinculo and Stephano to remind us that we are but men, whilst sustaining the lofty flight of the soul into those unknown regions through which the

author carries us. I say nothing of friend Caliban : he is sublime in his ugliness moral and physical, and might therefore, both in Art and Literature, be brought, if only by way of contrast, into the immediate presence of the beautiful.

The Greeks have produced a Greek Art, the Italians an Italian one, and if Sculpture is to be at all successful in England, the character of it must be such as will mark it as English. Antique Art will still not be the less valuable as an instructor in the principles of form, and as inculcating that constant devotion to beauty which is ever its prevailing feature ; and the great Art of the middle ages will again instruct the student in imparting to his work mental power.

The two, but more particularly the first, will most probably ever be the chosen school-books of the pupil ; but he can no more expect to become an original sculptor, and to establish a permanent reputation by repeating, or more feebly imitating, ideas already portrayed in them, than he can expect to become a poet by writing in a dead language, or by adopting the old but obsolete system of the ancient dramatic and epic writers ; nor will a recurrence to the more modern feeling of the Italian mediæval school answer his purpose any better.

England must in Art be English, if she would hope to retain a mark of distinctiveness hereafter, and if not poetical in her Art the birthplace of Shakespeare and Milton can have no excuse to offer. It is the nature of the young aspirant to excellence in Art to cast aside old rules and obsolete ideas and thoughts, and to be sick and weary of a preaching-up the antique ; and in this way, if he be a genius, he often arrives at new views of Nature and new beauties in Art, entirely of his own creating, or, more properly speaking, discovering : but it

is in after-life, when he has obtained his highest degree of excellence, that he learns to curb those views by rules derived from what has gone before, and so becomes a leader instead of an abject follower of others; and by this time it will be well for him if he retain the opinion that neither what is old nor what is new is entirely without merit or without error.

The progress of Art may be likened to the ocean-tide, which, though gradually advancing, consists of numberless undulating waves, all carrying us perhaps in the right direction, yet sometimes sending us down as well as lifting us up; and points which, to the young and ardent, appear radiant with light while on his voyage, become to the old and experienced, looking at them as he does from the opposite end, so many shadowed rocks that threaten destruction. The truth is, as usual, between the two.

Restrain the beginner in Art too much by rules, and he becomes tame and spiritless, a mere parrot-like repeater of what even to himself has no meaning; remove all rules from him, and all those principles of his Art which the experience of ages has laid down as incontrovertible, and his imagination runs wild into the incongruous and absurd. In the former case his work dwindles into the imbecile and idiotic; in the other it runs, uncurbed by judgment, into the region of madness.

Macaulay touches on the subject of change in a manner that may be well worth your attention. He says, speaking of the two great parties that represent the differences of opinion on national matters: "Not only in Politics, but in Literature, in Art, in Science, in Surgery and Mechanics, in Navigation and Agriculture—nay, even in Mathematics, we find this distinction. Everywhere there is a class of men who cling with fondness to

whatever is ancient, and who, even when convinced by overpowering reasons that innovation would be beneficial, consent to it with many misgivings and forebodings. We find also, everywhere, another class of men, sanguine in hope, bold in speculation, always pressing forward, quick to discern the imperfections of whatever exists, disposed to think lightly of the risks and inconveniences which attend improvements, and disposed to give every change credit for being an improvement. In the sentiments of both classes there is something to approve. But of both the best specimens will be found not far from the common frontier. The extreme section of one class consists of bigoted dotards: the extreme section of the other consists of shallow and reckless empirics." I am now only, so to speak, introducing myself to you, in order that we may thoroughly understand each other; and I may say that I do not expect you to follow me blindly in all that I shall assert. Were you to do so, you would be giving up your own independence and that right of judgment which no artist can afford to relinquish; for by the constant use of it it is that the pupil advances to be the master, and that, having become a master, he still continues to be a pupil. A professional lecturer has ever an unconscious tendency to colour his discourse with the prevailing tints of his own practice: he is in this respect, however, neither better nor worse than his fellow-workers, for we are all more prone to bend principles to practice than practice to principles, and to advocate with more or less fondness our own particular walk. I wish you to place yourself not far from the frontier, where, as Macaulay says, the best men are found; to weigh fairly my words, neither entirely rejecting nor hastily accepting them. You will thus, whatever may be the result, be

exercising your judgment ; and by a comparison of your own thoughts with those of others arrive in all probability at what is right ; and the very effort at comparison will be of service in carrying you onward in the path of truth. I will now speak to you of what is generally understood amongst us by the term proper tone of mind ; and I am induced to touch upon it from a belief that a due cultivation of it will help to improvement in your Art more than is generally admitted.

The same good feeling I ask of you whilst listening to me will enable you, while looking at and examining the works of your fellow-competitors, to see what is good in them, to understand their intention, and to appreciate their ideas and struggles after excellence.

The professed critic, who, it would seem, ought not, or at any rate does not appear to perceive anything but errors and deficiencies, loses, I firmly believe, by the constant habit of looking at everything with a jaundiced eye, all pleasure, I would almost say all knowledge, and most certainly all love for Art ; but the artist himself must ever keep up those pleasurable sensations which he derives from his Art, as they are ever the greatest incitements to an earnest following of his calling. What he does with delight to himself he will be sure to do best, and what he accomplishes without that delight will ever be reckoned among his comparative failures.

The Art of a man of refined and liberal mind always indicates refinement : there are artists, indeed, who exhibit hardly any other quality ; but it ever redeems them from the commonplace, and makes them, though perhaps technically inferior to many others, deservedly favourites ; whilst others, with far more academic knowledge, and far more power with their brush or



chisel, can hardly eradicate from their productions a certain vulgarity inherent in themselves.

That we have had examples to the contrary cannot be doubted; the memoirs of Benvenuto Cellini, though written in an exaggerated style, display a loose code of morals scarcely to be admired, and other cases might be urged by an advocate on the opposite side of the argument: but it should be recollected that the faults of such men were, perhaps, more those of the times in which they lived than of the individuals themselves; and the greatest sculptor of this country was in himself a justification of the argument that a high tone of mind in matters unconnected with Art is conducive to excellence in Art itself.

Flaxman could not have been the great sculptor he was without having been also the good man that his life shows him to have been; and it is but too true that we have had instances amongst us of the possession of original genius, the effects of which have been contaminated, if not wholly nullified, by a want of proper balance of conduct and due observance of the ordinary rules of morality and good society. Even eccentricities in an artist are only excusable when he has had the misfortune to live at a time or in a country where his productions are wholly unappreciated and unrewarded. The peevish feeling of one so situated can be accounted for, if not fully justified; but when Art takes its proper place, and obtains its due recognition, as it is gradually doing with us, the artist becomes, so to speak, a full member of the world about him, and is called upon accordingly to assimilate himself to the manners and customs of that world. Pardon this. It is a common saying, and perfectly true, that in the works of everyone there is a certain amount of likeness to himself: this likeness is some-

times physical, but quite as often, or oftener, mental, very frequently both ; and this resemblance is not very difficult to perceive by those who study them with this view. The subjects chosen, as well as the mode of treatment, show it : through and in them may be seen the man of pure and elegant mind or the gross sensualist, the thorough man of the world or the careless, indifferent being, the good-natured humorist and the hard-hearted satirist, the man who sympathizes strongly with his fellow-man and the cold-hearted, miserly being who has but one strong sympathy, and that for self.

No better motive need be urged to the student than this for a general cultivation of his mind, at least not by a lecturer on Art ; for, in a profession where we are constantly, so to speak, compelled to write our signatures on canvas, marble, or otherwise, it will be quite as well that our writing should be of the very best.

I have spoken to you of Flaxman ; he was, as you are aware, the first Professor of Sculpture of the Royal Academy of London. No student will now be able to recollect him filling the office, nor to call to mind the simple yet sincere manner in which his lectures were delivered ; but they are luckily published, and easy to be obtained, and I would sincerely recommend an attentive perusal and study of them.

There is no harm in my confessing to you that I had for a long time but an indifferent opinion of their merits. Not, of course, that there is one word in the whole of wrong import to the Art on which he wrote ; but I fancied them wanting in practical utility as well as in energy or emphasis of diction : but on devoting my attention more carefully to them, I seem to detect clearly what he thought most worthy of attention ; and

how a pure style in Art could, in his opinion, be best cultivated, and first principles most clearly laid down and explained. He knew that his Art was a truly simple one, simple in its theory, simple in its means and in all its modes of practice, simple and unaffected in all the ideas it attempts to portray. He believed that unaffected simplicity and singleness of purpose was one of its greatest charms, and he knew no complicated mode of argument or abstruse theories that could be brought to bear upon it. He had no invaluable secrets to keep from the student, and his language as well as his mode of delivery were consequently clear and unaffected; his meaning as honest, straightforward, and simple as he was in himself both as a man and as an artist. In his lectures he touches upon the history of the Art in Ancient Greece and Rome, as well as the more modern one of our own country, referring you to the writings chiefly of Pliny for the former, where are found more allusions to celebrated works and to artists of high reputation than in the pages of any other classic writer; and where it is curious to read what are evidently authentic records of facts and names, amidst much on other subjects that can, now that our knowledge has advanced, only be looked upon as curiosities of a dark age, as mere hearsay traditions, or the pretended wisdom of the most ignorant quacks.

This, however, tends to show the importance which Art then possessed in comparison with other things. Flaxman in his lectures coupled with the surer experience of a later time something of the simple mode of expression of the old classic writers of whom he was so fond. After a chapter or two on the history of his Art, he expatiates in a short, but it must be admitted, somewhat vague manner on its first principles, style

and beauty; gives certain instructions on the proportions of the human figure, adding some valuable rules as to the extent and limit of its movements, and the successive changes of equilibrium of which those movements consist. These, with some hints on the fall of drapery, and its lines, whether at rest or affected by air or other influences, are all that he appears to have thought necessary. Here, in fact, you have the most valuable part of his writings, because the most practical. He seems to have felt that the student must endeavour, modelling-tool in hand, to work out the rest for himself as best he can in the Schools of Art, where always the most important part of his study takes place. After all, perhaps Flaxman taught more, certainly produced more effect, on the English school of Sculpture by what he did than by what he said.

Example, in Art particularly, is ever more powerful than precept; the more so that the teacher passes away whilst his works remain. You will perhaps ask, if this great man has told us all that is necessary for our Art, why are you here to trouble us further on the matter? his words are published, and we can read them in our quiet, leisure moments. Do so by all means. The question is a fair one. My undertaking to give any further instruction may appear like vanity, but it is not so; I do not profess to put forth new ideas upon an old Art. Perhaps too many have already been put forth, at any rate I have, I confess, had some anxiety about the general tone of thought which pervades at this moment the public mind with regard to Sculpture, and which is showing its evil influence, if not in our schools, at any rate in our annual exhibitions and in our public monumental works. Of these, however, it would be dangerous to speak. Besides, I fancy I have another excuse. With

all my sincere admiration for Flaxman, the best writer on Sculpture we have, I cannot help thinking that he is, as I have before hinted to you, sometimes vague and indefinite. He is perhaps a little too fond of referring to celebrated works as examples of what he advocates rather than of giving the reasons for which they are so much and so justly admired. He puts them forward, but he makes but little attempt at analyzing them. He lays strong stress on moral and religious qualities as influencing the Art, and in this he is right. At any rate, the doctrine is characteristic of the man, and thoroughly exemplified in himself; but the words lofty, noble, dignified, and such like, may be very appropriate qualities, and yet the naming of them may help the student but little in imparting them to his own works.

Perhaps I may be able, in my more commonplace and less poetical language, to go more into detail, and to enter more closely into causes, and thereby show how these excellences are attained. If so I shall be able to say that "I have done the State some service," and shall be contented with the result.







STATUE OF JOHN HUNTER.

*H. Weekes, R.A.*



## LECTURE II.

### COMPOSITION.



THE rules of Composition are more strict in Sculpture, just as the Art itself is more limited in its means, than Painting. Discord, or want of harmony, becomes more evident when form alone has to be depended on, instead of, as in the other Art, where line, colour, and a fixed light and shade not only help to make up the whole, but often serve to conceal the faults and shortcomings of one another. I propose, therefore, to give you my ideas on Composition in Sculpture, and will begin by presuming that the student has succeeded in attaining the power of imitating Nature, and of selecting from such Nature the common or representative from that which is merely individual; and that he is able to convey what he has thus learnt properly to see and feel into his model. The first thing he will do is to search out a subject to illustrate, and naturally, almost unconsciously, he will select one that harmonizes most with his inward feelings, or that appeals most strongly to the nature within him. In this, however, he is not wrong, as he will for that very reason go farther with it than he would with any other: for the individuality expressed in his works will, after all, be the footmark by



which he will be recognized in the path of Art, and I know of no rule in Sculpture that need interfere with or obliterate it.

There are other points in the choice of a subject besides its affinity to the artist ; it must be suitable to the Art itself—a suggestive, not wholly an imitative one. The thought conveyed must suggest other thoughts, not only other, but higher and better thoughts ; and it must be adapted to the means and materials employed in the Art so as to be capable of Sculpturesque treatment. Let us examine what subjects are appropriate or not to Sculpture.

A proper selection often goes far towards the success of the work : it will not altogether secure it ; but a bad selection negatives all chance of success, however good may be the workmanship. The ancient mythological deities were, to the ancients, all appropriate for Sculpture ; but sympathy with them, as I have before said, we have to a great extent, if not altogether, lost. They are still associated, it is true, with their beautiful literature, and as such form the intellectual treat of the classic scholar ; but the public at large hardly cares for them—scarcely looks at them. Yet their suggestiveness is not altogether gone, as you may prove to yourselves if you read the beautiful lines of Byron on the so-called “Dying Gladiator.” They serve well to show you that Sculpture is, or ought to be, rather a suggestive, than an imitative Art ; and I place great dependence on Byron’s views, because I believe his to have been just the sort of imaginative mind that could thoroughly appreciate the abstract beauty of Sculpture, notwithstanding that often, in his sarcastic moods, he ridiculed the Art. It is well too, sometimes, to look out of the profession for opinions, and, as Burns says, “see ourselves as others see us.” It will be going somewhat aside from my sub-

ject—Composition—if I say that the statue is not intended, after all, to represent a gladiator. The trumpet lying on the base shows it, I think, to be a dying herald, and its commonplace sort of features, with its rough, uncombed, matted head of hair indicate it as belonging to a barbarian race. In this respect, too, it corresponds with various heads in the galleries of Italy which have originally had, or at any rate have assumed, the name of Barbarian Chiefs. The professional gladiator of the Romans was, like our prize-fighter, a trained man, and aware of the necessity of keeping his head closely cropped in order not to give a hold for his antagonist. You may see this in a most interesting Mosaic pavement in the Lateran, where a series of portraits, some full-sized heads, and some whole lengths of gladiators are given, and where not only the general character of the men themselves, but also the various weapons and modes of offence and defence resorted to in the fights are faithfully represented. There is no exaggeration in them, but they give evidence of the wonderful development of the human form obtained by the cultivation of their athletic games.

Returning to the word suggestiveness or association, I may mention that Hawthorne, in his admirable resuscitation of the Praxiteles Faun, in his novel called "Transformation," where it forms the gem of the book, acknowledges that the character, thus almost created, is in reality suggested by the figure in question. But read it : see how poetically suggestive the statue becomes when its suggestive qualities meet with a suitable mind for their recipient. He paints him as a wild gentleman (the statue is that of a gentleman) pure and free from sin, living in his isolated château, drinking Falernian wine that does not inebriate, and as having, by virtue of his purity, a certain affinity

with the lower order of beings that enables him to understand their language, and converse with them in their own tongue. He becomes, in fact, in the novelist's hands, the representative of primitive man ; not so perfect or so separated from animal life as is the Scriptural Adam, but sprung from the lower orders, more intimately connected with them, and yet a step higher than they are. Like Adam, too, crime brings to him consciousness and knowledge, and at the same time separation in the link that ties him to the inferior beings.

I have dwelt on this because it shows that Sculpture is, or rather ought to be, suggestive in its character, rather than content itself with that which it can never be without degradation—simply imitative.

You will tell me, perhaps, that while asserting that heathen subjects have almost lost association with us, I have argued in the contrary direction ; but you must recollect that in the instances here alluded to association comes to us second-hand through the poets, and arises quite as much from the mode of treatment as from the original source itself. The pagan mythology has ever been the favourite in Sculpture owing to its admitting more freely and consistently the use of the nude ; but I would advise the student rather to avoid it than otherwise.

There are subjects connected with Biblical history at least as suitable, and that derive suggestive power from that history, and thence again to us from their connection with our religion ; and that are, at the same time, well fitted for Sculpture. There are some, however, even there where the bad so prevails over the good, where so little light can be seen through the wretched darkness, that they become, in my opinion, totally unfit for

illustration in Art, whether Painting or Sculpture, and yet they are very often chosen.

Take, for instance, the murder of the innocents ; the horror of the thing is so overwhelming that there is no room for the soul to rise again into the light of the good. Sermonizers may perhaps be able to extract good from it, as some of them seem to have the knack of doing from everything that is written or related, historically or otherwise ; but such men appear to me rather to resemble, in this faculty, the conjuror, who, after twisting about his bag in all directions so as to convince you there is nothing in it, manages to extract, or to appear to extract, egg after egg from that which before was so evidently empty. The impression, nevertheless, is left strong upon you that the bag was always empty, or, in other words, the eggs never in it.

I will give you another example from a different source, where no real good is attained from the same mistake. The starvation of Count Ugolino and his family. The best thing that can be said in its favour is that it is part of history, and an illustration of a most beautiful poet. Could you write an entire history of the man, you might, perhaps, extract good from it altogether, but in Art you have to deal with a part only, and give the suffering by itself, and suffering is not the proper province of Art to represent ; on the contrary, there must always be a certain amount of pleasure resulting from it, or it fails in its purpose.

Flaxman has, by his simple outline, indicated the awful character of this scene as strongly as any artist who ever touched upon it, but then it is only one among many of his illustrations of Dante, and so takes but a part of a whole, serious, but not irretrievably sad.

In Sir Joshua Reynolds's version of it, standing alone, the misery is as terribly depicted as it can possibly be. In one sense of the word it is one of his finest works, yet no one would wish to live with it. Michael Angelo has chosen it, too, as the subject of a bas-relief; and as such fine modelling was never, before or since, concentrated within so small a compass, for this reason it is, and perhaps ever will be, a favourite with artists, more so than with outside lovers of Art. There is to me, too, a mistake in it besides choice of subject which belongs to treatment. The personification of starvation hanging over the victims is positively disgusting, and the disgusting is very far from the sublime.

I will readily acknowledge my inability to model a figure so full of power, so undeniably true to Nature; but I cannot so readily acknowledge the propriety of its representation in Art. Avoid this sort of subject if you can; they are rarely, only under very peculiar circumstances, admissible: the better they are treated the more offensive they become. A little consideration will at once enable you to detect them, and distinguish them from the truly heroic. Recollect the rule in dramatic poetry, that crime should be kept behind the scenes, in order that the moral may be brought more to the front; it is equally applicable to your Art. Let your "Macbeth" finish with the death and punishment of the murderer, but never drag his bloody head upon the stage to gratify a morbid taste in your audience, and so convert the sublime into the horrible. The two are very far apart from each other.

It may not be amiss here if I give you my ideas respecting line and form as found in Nature. We shall come soon enough to the studio, where we have to put on our working-dress, take

the modelling-tool in hand, and treat of the executive part of our Art. I am no despiser of that, nor do I agree with persons who call it the mechanical portion ; indeed, no one would venture to use the term who knew anything of that delicate touch of the hand which emanates so directly from the brain, and produces in its result that ever-varying undulation of surface so charming in Sculpture. The head of Medusa turned flesh into stone by its gaze, but a true sculptor can turn stone into flesh by his touch. I wish, however, to prepare your mind for the work. For my present purpose I shall take form and line as expressing two separate and distinct meanings. I shall describe form as representing the bulk of the whole, that which is contained within certain cubic measurements comprehending the entire object, more or less geometrical in shape. I shall define line as meaning the general direction of that form, whether horizontal, as in repose ; perpendicular, as in life but quietude ; or slanting, as in action more or less violent ; and I shall describe it as undulatory, angular, varied, or continuous, according as it partakes more or less of these characteristics.

Do these forms and lines make any general impression on the eye, as found in Nature without reference to Art, and irrespective of the aid of the definite character given to them by their possessor ? I find the pyramid or cone, when standing on its base, conveys firmness, stability, immovability ; and I feel that if standing on its apex instead of its base, it creates the fear of instability, and seems to belong to the volatile or airy. I fancy that an equal-sided cube, from its possessing no variation of parts, becomes monotonous, and consequently unpleasant ; whilst an unequal parallelogram gives pleasure from that very variety. I can understand that the horizontal is significant of

repose, or, if you will, of death; and that, when carried without variation to a great length, it produces the feeling of infinity, which is always accompanied by grave thoughts. A long-drawn, continuous note in music affects you in the same manner, while again in both Arts, Music and Sculpture, quick changes of note and rapidly varying lines give action, lively sensations, and excitement.

Regular or geometrical character is ever more or less present in Nature; her forms in the higher orders are all composed of duplicate parts that coincide with each other, and it is only in the lower and vegetable kingdoms that any great departure from this regularity takes place: here, however, it is not wholly abandoned; many trees as well as other things convey very distinctly in their general outline an approximation to regular forms by which they may be recognized one from another even at a distance; and when examined more closely, their leaves are arranged with more regularity than is at first evident. Regularity is never wholly lost sight of even in them, for without it would be confusion; though the complete form indicated by each is only approached, never attained: were it to be complete, a monotonous formality would be exchanged for one of Nature's chiefest charms, variety.

Here I think you have some of the principles of composition in Sculpture. It should partake of geometrical regularity in a degree, and variety in a degree; more of one and less of the other, according as the subject is one of quiescence or action, or according as it is of a joyous or sombre nature: both, however, I apprehend, must ever be present. The design may partake of a kite-like shape, as in the instance of the Apollo Belvidere, where the extent is greater in the upper than in the lower part,

and where the greatest quantity is given by the drapery on the side to which the action tends; and the tree, serving for support, is placed on the opposite side, to help the impression of action by throwing the whole more out of the centre of gravitation.

You have another example of an approximation to geometrical form serving as a balance to the most violent action, as expressed by an endless variety of serpentine lines—the group of the Laocoon and sons.

Its somewhat mechanical arrangement has been much criticized, owing to its apparent formality; but it appears to me not only in harmony with the rule I offer to you, but gaining by that harmony a power that seems to lift the actors in the very agonies of death above that death.

The dignity of the father and priest is maintained by it, even under the terrible circumstances in which he is placed; and the necessary sculpturesque character is preserved.

Sculpture, too, should partake of a geometrical character, even in a greater degree than is found in Nature, as it is ever more or less connected with Architecture, whose forms are purely geometrical, never imitative. The equally balanced composition of the Laocoon and sons is justified also by the place in which it was found.

A large but shallow niche is shown in the Baths of Titus in Rome, from out of which the work was taken, and it explains at once in the most simple manner why the three sculptors, Agesander, Polydorus, and Athenodorus, sacrificed almost everything in the way of effect for the sake of the front view, the only one that could be well seen. Pliny mentions this group as belonging to the Emperor Titus, and as



preferable to any other production of the Art of Painting or Sculpture.

Formality of composition prevailed in Egyptian Sculpture almost to the exclusion of variety: Egyptian Sculpture may in fact be termed semi-architectonick. Figure after figure is repeated in their temples with scarcely a deviation either in character or attitude, and the figures themselves are so designed that the limbs on either side are the same, and thus what I term a geometrical arrangement is intentionally kept. I am not advising the going back to that extreme treatment, which was rather, perhaps, the result of a limited knowledge and over-rigid rules with regard to their Art, combined with some other restrictions derived from the nature of their materials; but you cannot deny that a great impression is made by this severe monotony. The Egyptians were, in comparison with the Greeks, uninstructed in the human figure, and the laws of caste prevented any great advancement, but you must not look at their works as wholly primitive: they had a feeling for the sublime and beautiful as well as the Greeks, though in an inferior degree, and were not wholly without the power of representing movement; for we find it in some of their very small works, and frequently in the coloured intaglios on their walls, where are depicted their battles, their processions, their adorations of their gods, and their homage to their rulers. If absent from their larger productions, it is not altogether from the difficulties they had to deal with, but because they felt that action tended to diminish the solemn grandeur of their higher personages. Try yourself to model an Egyptian face or figure without an original before you: you might succeed, but I doubt if I should myself, in giving their expression and beauty, and that calm yet not un-

amiable indifference which seems to look down on the petty passing events of the moment with the placid smile of beings to whom a thousand years are but as yesterday. Their animals are wonderful examples of the seizing of true character by means of a few principal, but well-defined, truthful lines, and an omission of all unnecessary detail.

From the severe repose of Egyptian Sculpture, we may turn to a Greek, or, more properly speaking, Greco-Roman example that exhibits exactly the opposite quality: the Fighting Gladiator, or, as it is perhaps better named, the lesser Ajax. Here one long, continuous, slanting line, created by an extension of the body and limbs in the same direction, and making, with the base on which the figure stands, rather an acute angle, conveys the idea of most energetic movement, the only opposing line in the whole composition being the thigh of the advanced leg, sufficient to convey the impression of support, but not sufficient to impede the idea of rapid motion. Had, by any arrangement of drapery or otherwise, this opposing line been made longer or more important, the effect of action would have been defeated. Of the admirable proportions and learned modelling contained in this figure, or of the just balance in all its parts, I need not now speak: every artist, painter, or sculptor acknowledges them; but I would advise no student to be drawn into excess by an over-admiration of its composition. Action, which is a constant losing and recovery of the balance, is a succession of *poses* so rapid that no one singly makes any strong impression on the eye. A man cannot really represent in himself the fighting hero for more than a part of a second. A model may place himself in the *pose*, and hold himself in it, but his limbs soon begin to tremble, and his muscles

to relax ; and, what is worse, you feel he is acting : and so it is to a certain extent with the figure ; the permanent character of a statue is antagonistic to great action, though it abides well enough with more gentle movement, and is completely at home with repose.

There is another reason why strong action is objectionable in Sculpture : you rarely, if ever, can give the cause—at least, not in a single figure ; and where you have strong movement, you are bound, I think, to give the motive in order to make it intelligible. Most of the best works of Sculpture consist of single figures, and in that respect it is like portrait-painting. You have often noticed how fond inferior men in that department are of strong action : their generals wave their swords in the air ; their orators extend their arms, or screw up with intense energy the scroll of paper in their hand, as if advocating the most profound principles and uttering the most patriotic sentiments ; but to whom the sword points, or what it is to cut, unless it be the curtain always ready at the back of the head, I do not know, nor can I say where are the rebels against common sense the noble orator is addressing.

At any rate the cause is absent, and the effect consequently becomes unintelligible, if not ludicrous. In figures grouped together, there are, of course, more means of indicating the cause of action than in single ones, though in the latter it may be made sufficiently evident. In the two different statues of the Discobolon the cause in both is given by the presence of the disk in the hand ; and in one of them, supposed to be a copy from a bronze, action of a very energetic kind is portrayed, contrary to what I have ventured to assert—namely, that Sculpture deals best with repose. Excuses, however, have been made for

it by assertions that it was probably a record of the manner of throwing the disk peculiar to some celebrated player. *Qui s'excuse s'accuse* : both figures are excellent, but the eye likes to dwell more on the gentle, quiet one, who is watching the course of his disk, than on the one who is making the cast. There is a quiet sentiment, however, very superior to this, and more in unison with the feeling of Sculpture, which tells, perhaps, the history of a life, or the poetry of an ideal creation. The rest and weariness portrayed in the Farnese Hercules give more of the grandeur of the demi-god, and speak more eloquently of his immense labours and overwhelming strength, than do the representations of him when carrying off the Cretan bull on his shoulders, or contending for life with the Nemæan lion. Each of these last brings him before you only as in one of his triumphs, but the tired giant leaning on his club, with the skin of the lion hanging about it, seems to speak of all he has undergone, and of all he has overcome. Antique Sculpture in its composition restricts itself generally to two figures, seldom using three for a group, and scarcely ever exceeding that number—at least, not in its efforts in the round. Relievos come under different rules ; they have more licence from their nearer affinity to Painting.

The Niobe and Children, and other works of a like kind, can hardly altogether be considered as groups or figures in the round ; they are certainly free from their backgrounds, but filling, as they undoubtedly did, the pediment of a temple, they come more under the regulations of reliefs, from their being seen only from one point of view—the front—and from their being composed solely for that view. There is, after all, in this celebrated work scarcely more than one group of two figures, the

mother and child in the centre, the rest are, with one exception, of minor size and value, distinctly single figures. This group of the mother and child, placed in the middle of the composition, makes, when viewed in front, a nearly perpendicular line, to which the diagonal lines formed by the attitudes of the children converge, following, generally speaking, the line of the roof of the building. This is the necessary formality of which I spoke to you as tending to unite in feeling Sculpture with Architecture.

The variety in this great work I am sure you will acknowledge as both sufficiently evident and beautiful. The centre group, too, not only becomes the more important by the close union of the two figures, mother and child, and so concentrates in itself the chief interest of the whole, but by its being in every way more in quantity than the rest and from its line being comparatively more perpendicular than any of the others, it conveys the impression of support to the apex of the pediment. There is a figure of a dead son which makes a short horizontal line on the base, but this, perhaps, is only one of those minor deviations necessary to prevent a too close approximation to mechanical arrangement.

I have already endeavoured to suggest to you that the same deviations, but not utter departures from geometrical forms, intentionally exist in Nature herself. The figure of the dead son may have, however, served to fill up one of the acute angles at the extremes of the pediment, as may also another beautiful fragment of a naked boy; in which case their lines would both have been in complete harmony with that of the other children. Pliny speaks of this work as belonging to the Temple of the Sosian Apollo—that is to say, of an Apollo brought from

Selucia by Sosius—but seems uncertain whether it is the work of Scopas or Praxiteles; perhaps of both, for I find the second group of the father and son not only secondary in size, but of inferior design and workmanship.

The mother and daughter in the centre is one of the finest examples of Greek Art, and one of the very few containing what we understand by the word *pathos*. That this quality should be rare in pagan Art may be easily understood by a study of the manners of the people. Stoicism was founded by Zeno, and carried on, with little modification, by Epictetus; nor were the Epicureans much more in favour of it, even in their early days, before their creed became the by-word of voluptuousness. To give way under trouble, to show sensitiveness under injustice and misfortune, was with them a weakness which received but little sympathy. *Pathos*, though a Greek word, belongs more in its meaning to Christian than to pagan Art. *Pathos*, however, was not wholly absent from Greek Art, for we read also in Pliny of a painter named Timanthes, who was much extolled by the orators for his picture of Iphigenia, represented as standing at the altar awaiting her doom: and Pliny says of it that on the countenance of all present grief was depicted; but that, having already exhausted all the characteristic features of sorrow, the artist adopted the device of veiling the countenance of the father, finding himself unable adequately to give expression to his feelings. This must have been deeply pathetic, as must also have been another work recorded by the same author, by Aristides of Thebes, a contemporary with Apelles, who painted a captured city, in which was represented an infant crawling towards its wounded mother, who, though at the point of death,

has all the appearance of being aware of it, and of being in dread lest the child should suck blood in place of milk from her exhausted breast.

I must not omit a remark that Pliny makes upon the former of these two artists, Timanthes, though it hardly belongs to what I am now treating of—Composition. He says of him : “ There is always something more implied by his pencil than is expressed.” This, whether true or false, proves at any rate a knowledge in Pliny himself of the right principles of Art—that it should suggest to the intellect, rather than deceive the senses : though there are numerous anecdotes told in his work that might lead to the contrary argument, such as animals being deceived by clever representations of themselves—all mere fables, perfectly untrue and absurd ; for, independently of the want of the necessary sense to detect the effect of *chiaro-oscuro* and colour, the eyes of animals are, I believe, so placed in their heads as to render them incapable of receiving that impression of rotundity from a flat surface which we ourselves gain by practice, and which is much aided by the invention of the stereoscope.

Turning back to my observations on the composition of the Niobe group, I may say that the same rules are evident in the western pediment of the Temple at Ægina, a cast of which is in the British Museum. In this, too, the figure of Minerva, perfectly upright, serves the same purpose of support, whilst the combatants over the body of Patroclus, on either side, bend more or less towards that centre ; and three dying figures, Patroclus in the middle at the base, and one at each end, help what may be termed the geometrical balance. This work is, however, more primitive, earlier in date than the Niobe, and

the mode of composition is too clearly exposed : it wants the necessary variety to conceal the geometrical arrangement, but variety is a charm that comes late into Art. I know but of one remarkable exception to what I have before said of groups in antique Sculpture being confined to three figures—the Tying of Dirce to the Bull, in the Borbonica Museum of Naples ; but though finely modelled, it does not appear to me to be successful in its lines and arrangement.

The figures seem astray from one another—too far apart, not quite to harmonize—or in other words, hardly to have a principal line running through them. There is something of the kind in the front view, but there the accessories, consisting of a dog, a very small figure, and some rocks, become too important. You can have no better rule in Sculpture with regard to accessories than that implied by Flaxman, where he says : “ Even in basso-relievo, a tree or two, some rude stone, a flat column, or a wall slightly marked in the background, must indicate a forest, a mountain, or a palace, without detailing a portrait of their component parts.” That Sculpture confines itself in its compositions to two, or at most to three figures, is not owing wholly to the limits of the material in which it has to be carried out ; it may be partly due to that, and partly to the circumstance that the means by which it acts are also limited. The sculptor has form only to deal with, instead of form and colour ; and has, in consequence, to make that one do the work of two, and is obliged to study that form in all its details so as to render it fitted to express unaided the higher sentiments of the human character. This, of course, increases immensely the difficulty of his calling.

There is another reason why he should not, even if he could, multiply the quantity of his work beyond a certain range.



Sculpture is ever more or less, even in its highest walk, a decorative Art ; it is architecturally decorative. In ancient times it formed a decorative part of the temples, as it did again in the mediæval times of our churches ; later days have brought it into our public streets, and, to a certain extent, into our houses, where it holds the same office. A colourless work requires colour around it to set it off to advantage. Could an interior be composed entirely of colourless marble—walls, floor, ceiling, and everything—the result would be anything but pleasing, however well furnished it might be with Sculpture of the same colourless tone.

The business of Sculpture is to stop at intervals the play of colour in other objects ; to serve as a rest for the eye from too great glare of colour, whether produced by highly-tinted ornamentation, or from too continuous a line of rich pictorial Art. I have no hesitation in saying that were the Sculpture in our annual exhibitions judiciously mixed in the rooms with the paintings—were it dotted along the walls at regular intervals, it would not only add to its effect, but the very paintings themselves would be benefited by it, as the contrast would give a resting place for the eye from the excitement caused by the constant changes of colour.

The experiment was tried with thorough success in the first Great Exhibition of Paris. I shall do good if I make you feel that, from the above-mentioned causes, Sculpture tells better in comparatively small quantities, and when viewed in conjunction with other things, than when collected together by itself, as is sometimes done in the few houses where Sculpture-galleries are expressly provided for it.

There are many things which tend to aid Composition ; de-

fining the word as arranging lines and forms so as to render them expressive of their purpose — drapery, for instance, whether covering the whole figure, or, as in many known examples of the antique, serving merely as an accessory to the nude, acting as a support, or for filling up unnecessary hollows. It should generally follow the principal line of the figure or group, so as to emphasize that line; but it may sometimes serve the purpose of opposition by its folds going in exactly the contrary direction, so as to bring out in stronger effect particular parts in contact with which it is seen.

Opposition lines, however, it stands to reason, should always be the weakest or most secondary; otherwise they would take the place of the principal ones, and counteract and nullify the intention and harmony of the whole. They may be used with more freedom where strong action has to be expressed, as they tell of the difficulty contended with in representations of combats, feats of strength, and things of that kind; but where elegance, gentleness, or repose is intended to be conveyed, they must be introduced with the greatest possible caution—hardly suffered to obtrude themselves at all.

Drapery covering the surface of a figure should be so composed as to indicate by its lines and the comparative strength of its parts the action of the body and limbs, as well as the divisions of the human frame beneath it. In Nature it is merely a piece of covering employed for the sake of display, comfort, or decency; in Art it has other purposes, it has to help the understanding of what it envelops.

The groups in the British Museum from the Parthenon, called Ceres and Proserpine and The Fates, are good lessons in the composition of drapery. The folds assist the *plomb* of

the figures, follow the movement of the limbs, give roundness and distinctness to the parts by their varying depths, and play about the surface, imparting life and movement to the whole without ever once counteracting in the least the one simple line which they all combine to make. The material to be used in a work affects in a great degree its composition ; for example, marble enables you to display all those inner details which help the effect of the general outline, and which more or less become, in some view or other, part of that outline.

The sculptor will do well, too, so to design his figure or figures that the parts shall be tolerably solid, as little liable as possible to accident, and that they shall help to give one another the necessary support for durability. No general rule can be laid down for this, the student must be left to his own ingenuity, and to the contemplation of the examples found in the antique, of which there are many. The difficulty exists, and the artist in marble has to contend with it, and he must, while contending with it, conceal as far as he can his plan of battle.

These precautionary measures become unnecessary when dealing with bronze ; here the substance used is durable enough for any effort of relief or fragility of parts ; but other necessities arise.

A work in bronze has to depend almost wholly upon what is termed its sky-line, or positive contour ; not, again, that neglecting the interior parts can be tolerated, for they all in their turn become a part of that sky-line : but the idea must, as far as possible, be expressed by what we understand by the word silhouette—that is, a marginal line or contour filled up by blank space with all inner forms omitted. This arises of course from

the dark colour of bronze hiding the inner details ; so much so that in certain lights they become, in large works seen from a distance, almost invisible.

Our climate in this respect is peculiarly unsuited to bronze ; but the effect is the same more or less in all countries. What therefore has the artist to do in this case ? He has so to design his statue or group, so to arrange his drapery and secondary parts, that they shall display the human figure, its action, its proportions, all and every part and parcel thereof, as the lawyers say, clearly to the eye, by the exterior line alone, unaided by the dark interior that it surrounds. This renders many compositions well suited to marble quite unfit for bronze, as for example draped statues sitting in chairs, where the chair constitutes so much of the outline as to do away, when that outline is given alone, with the idea of a human figure being within it. This has not in some instances been duly attended to in the bronzes in our public streets. You have an instance of another kind of error in our public memorials ; the figure of Havelock in Trafalgar Square has at its back one of those trees so often used in antique Sculpture for the purpose of support in the marble ; the artist has, in the instance here alluded to, used it in the metal-work, where it is not only quite useless, but quite in the way of that good outline so necessary in works of a dark colour. The sculptor was a man of great ability, but without the power of sober, concentrated thought. The placing of the tree by him so inappropriately behind the statue reminds one of the Chinese tailor, who, on having a coat given him for a pattern, imitated the patches of the old in the new.

You have admirable examples of judicious treatment for

bronze in a small figure of Hercules with the Apples of the Hesperides in his hand, and in another of Apollo, in the British Museum. The tree in one and the drapery in the other are kept free from the figure, leaving its outline intelligible from all sides, so that the simple naked form may be distinguished, unassisted by any interior parts, almost from any distance. I know of no ancient Art in which the principle is better understood or more thoroughly carried out ; and I would advise the studying them with this view, and, if you like, in connection with some more modern works in bronze, a comparison with which will tend to impress the lesson more strongly on your minds. I am aware that modern costume scarcely admits of this simple, clear treatment ; but you will find that no attempt has been made towards it—on the contrary, that some of them run into the opposite error ; that no resemblance can be obtained of a living man from the extreme outline alone, but that the modeller has laboured in some instances to obtain a solidity, which might be useful in marble, but is positively detrimental in bronze. Sculpture always requires a certain amount of bulk under any circumstances, and dark objects appear to the eye less than light-coloured ones ; so that in bronze it is requisite to be additionally careful not to run into meagreness. Quantity gives dignity, but over-attenuation is always objectionable.

The example of what I shall, for the sake of argument, call attenuated form in antique Art, is the beautiful recumbent figure of Hermaphroditus ; but the union of the form with the mattress on which it is lying reconciles us to its wire-drawn weakness of frame, which, if standing up with its outline free on all sides, would be scarcely bearable. I am not advising attenuated

treatment for bronze, but a free and open arrangement, so that nothing may be lost, but every part distinct and intelligible at once. There are still other things that affect Composition besides these. Works that are to be viewed from a distance require still more distinctness of form and line than even those that are to be seen nearer. The sculptor should recollect that he cannot resort, for the separating his Composition into parts, to the means the painter has in colour and in fixed light and shade.

Two shapes, say of the human frame, of nearly equal size and character may, with the colourist, come in such close contact as to be in effect only one; and yet he can indicate the necessary separation between the two by differences in their natural hue, or by clothing them in opposite colours, and thus make them sufficiently distinct from one another. He uses these means often for this purpose, as he often does the reverse for the preservation of breadth; but the sculptor can only resort to contrast of texture, to an opposition of highly detailed drapery with one of great breadth, or at the most to a deepening, by means of sharply cut folds or otherwise, of those divisions which, under any circumstances, are left to him. There are splendid illustrations of this rule in the Metopes of the Parthenon. With every temptation for close grouping which a subject like the contest of the Lapithæ and Centaurs affords, the sculptor (Phidias recollect) has, with very few exceptions, kept the two figures contending with each other separate from one another, distinct in their outline to a degree that would be almost singular, and even unnatural, did we not know his reason for so doing, namely, that his story had to be told by form alone, and to be read from afar; and that, consequently,

every letter in his words had to be given in large type, and with large spaces between.

I have endeavoured to take a very practical line in this short prospectus on Composition, and to give you a few simple rules, all that I believe are necessary for an Art in itself most simple, and for that reason the purest and most grand. It is hardly necessary to tell the student that the more poetical the subject the more poetical will be his illustration of it, presuming—and it is a great presumption—that the grasp of his mind is equal to the task.

Let him take our own poets and historians if he can for illustration, or let him create within himself independently his own subject, and give forth his own original thoughts: he will still have the antique to guide him in style, to teach him what he may take for his purpose, and what he should avoid. I have ventured to assert that it is upon a single graceful, undulating line running through the whole that he must depend for the expression of that idea, and for that harmonious beauty which shall attract people to his work; and I believe the few hints I have given on line will serve him for the relative quality and force of parts.

His means may appear poor to him at first sight, but practice in the use of them will show him that he has all that is necessary, and that the restrictions under which he works save him from many temptations to vicious habits in Art which he would otherwise be liable to.

Sculpture can never be popular, for it can never descend low enough to pander to popular taste; but there is enough of pleasure in it for the true lover of Art. Let the student thoroughly believe in it, and act up to that belief, and he will find his reward elsewhere.

The great Flaxman was a true believer. His immediate recompense, in a worldly sense, was far less than that of his contemporaries ; but his name is now growing higher and higher, whilst many who, in point of popular appreciation, were far his superiors are sinking into oblivion. If you cannot look at your Art in this light you are no true disciple, and had better, for your own sake, as well as for the sake of the Art itself, turn your back upon it and go your way.







### LECTURE III.

### BEAUTY.



OUR great Flaxman says, in his lecture on Beauty, that it is not merely an imaginary quality, but a real essence; and goes on by declaring that doubts can scarcely be entertained that there are principles of Beauty, because various opinions prevail in different countries on the subject.

The assertion undoubtedly is correct, though the latter part of the sentence fails to prove the truth of the former; and, if so, it certainly follows that it is the business of the student to ascertain what are those principles, that he may be guided by them in his work.

It does not follow because Flaxman was the greatest designer in Sculpture of modern times that he was the clearest exponent in his Art. He felt strongly within himself the truth of what he wrote, on Beauty particularly, for his works are imbued with it; but his writings appear to me to deal in rhapsodies, and in allusions to illustrious examples of it, rather than in propounding principles beneficial to the student to understand.

I need scarcely say that he was well acquainted with the history of Sculpture, and with the finest works of the ancients,

and seemed to believe, indeed did believe, that a studious contemplation of them was the best help to producing the like ; but how is it that it never occurred to him to ask, did these old workers of miracles carry out their purpose by divine inspiration alone, or had they any natural laws by which they were bound, or rules that led them to the right and repelled them from the wrong? I think they had, and my reason for so thinking is that the highest epoch of Sculpture was coeval with that of the profoundest philosophy in Greece, the country which put forth in Sculpture the most glorious specimens of Beauty, whether human or divine ; and that I find by the writings of Plato and others that all questions—what is Beauty? among the rest—were subjected to the most searching analysis, nothing accepted on faith, nor admitted but on the most conclusive proof. Flaxman must have felt this himself, for he was well acquainted with these writings, but he does not in his lectures set forth anything of the kind to the students. The best things his pen has left us are on the proportions of the human figure, on action, and on drapery : these are all practical, and though he ranges them under the head of Science, they might not inappropriately come under that of Beauty. His discourse on the last word, I am sorry to say, I must pronounce to be vague and ineffective.

This is said in no spirit of disrespect to Flaxman, who stood far above us all in that dreamland of imagination from whence flow the great fountains of genius. That he was master of the question he was discussing I have already admitted : perhaps he gave too great credit to his audience for possession of that intuitive perception which he had himself, and so did not care to be too explicit ; but the business of the lecturer is to explain and illustrate ; his province is the reason, not the imagination ;

and to this alone he must appeal, though he may desert by it one of the most charming domains of his Art.

He cannot create genius, cannot always follow it through the wide range it takes in its flight; but he may point out the boundaries of the road, as well as some of the difficulties that beset it; and for this reason an inferior man may often be a better exponent of his calling than one who exercises the highest faculties in it.

With this short prelude, I will proceed to give you my ideas on Beauty—a word so important in Sculpture that without it all value ceases, and Fine Art becomes *nil*. Its importance here is greater than in Painting, because of the restrictions within which Sculpture has to work. It cannot resort to colour, only in a degree to character, and not at all to ugliness, which in Painting is often made a vehicle for the stronger conveying of expression, and so must never desert its one Calypso on her solitary island, on whose smiles its happiness depends. By Beauty I do not mean female charms alone—a limited term, included in that vaster range of Nature, where, if properly studied and understood, a universal Beauty will be found to exist. Woman's loveliness is a part of the question more studied perhaps by sculptors than any other, and more brought under our notice, but still only a part—though a prominent one, because the nearest to us—of a whole, coming under one rule that is applicable to everything, whether appealing to our sight or through any other of our senses.

Few artists, when talking of Beauty, are able to lay down any theory or principle that will comprehend the whole question: the generality of them rather dream of, than think about it, and content themselves with referring to the antique, seldom

troubling themselves to consider from whence or how that antique obtains its beauty, or whether there is not a still greater source from whence it is derived.

I am not certain that I shall myself be able to lay before you a theory that shall be altogether unexceptionable. Many objections can be raised against it, objections that may at first appear insurmountable, but which, I fancy, when viewed in a broader light, will be found to be mere sophistry—the quibblings of a narrow-minded arguer, who looks at things through the shadow of his own personal prejudices. If I myself set before you these objections, it will be rather to show you that I wish to consider the question from all sides than to signify my belief in them. At any rate, if my theory be not a sound one, it shall be one of a practical kind, useful to the sculptor in his calling—one that will save him from many errors, and show him, when he may find himself at fault, which way to turn by the help of his own arguments. I do not myself pretend to be the originator of it, but I have given it my earnest consideration, and found it to be the only doctrine I can convince myself is sound. Far cleverer men have upheld it before me: light seems, indeed, to have dawned on the subject with those old Greek authors who wrote upon it in the presence of the beautiful examples belonging to their time, and since handed down to us; and their chief incitement to the study of the question seems to have been a belief that physical Beauty was indicative of moral excellence—a theory not altogether unsound, for though we often find strong instances to the contrary, they may be, after all, exceptions that prove the rule.

I am inclined to think that the old Greeks were correct in their ideas. We look upon a handsome face and are attracted

towards it ; but though we may find ourselves sometimes deceived, we shall allow that, generally, personal beauty is accompanied by a corresponding elevation of the mind, and that ugliness portrays a degradation of the moral powers : at any rate, the latter, if not always the original cause, is ever more or less the permanent expression or effect of such. The sculptor knows this, for he turns it to his own purpose in his art.

What few weaknesses there appeared to me at first sight in my theory have all vanished on a more careful and comprehensive view of it as a whole ; and I will here venture to remind you that an arguer on a question of this kind has no right to separate it into parts, and to consider them one by one irrespective of the others : he must look at it altogether, and endeavour to find out what reference each has to the whole, and how they all act together to accomplish one object or intention. An artist may examine the fragment of an antique statue, may admire and find beauty in it—it is rarely that he does otherwise ; but unless he has the whole figure before him, he has lost the meaning which the original sculptor intended by it : so, in the considering of questions of a general nature, like the one we are now discussing, unless he can gather up the fragments within his own mind and put them properly together, he will fail to perceive how they fit one into another, and create an entirety appropriate as well as beautiful.

Though puzzling enough when first put, the question, What is Beauty ? like Columbus's egg, is simple when the answer is once given ; it is this, Beauty is utility. By adopting this as your basis, you of course drop at once the idea that there is in Nature any one centre the divergence from which is a departure from Beauty—though this ridiculous notion has

before now been set up. No such thing exists ; each object has its own peculiar Beauty, quite separate and independent of any other : were it otherwise, one of the greatest beauties of Nature, variety, would be weakened, if not totally lost.

Flaxman, whose lectures I have abused in such reprehensible language, seems to me, perhaps unconsciously, to incline in one sentence to the doctrine that Beauty is utility. While illustrating his subject from the heathen mythology, of which he was so fond, and giving the distinctions of Beauty that existed between the gods, he says : “ Pluto continues the likeness of the Saturnian family ; his eyes have a spectre-like stare.” Had he slightly altered his words, and said his eyes are large, and the pupils dilated, he might have claimed for him the suitability, as well as the sublimity, that should belong to the ruler of Hades.

Flaxman speaks, too, of the difference between the Beauty of the Apollo Belvidere and that of Apollo the companion of the Muses, and again between that of Bacchus and Mercury ; and then, while claiming for them a family relationship one with another, acknowledges a divergence from that supposed centre of Beauty of which some persons talk. If this divergence exists in the human figure, how much greater must it be between creatures belonging to different classes, and whose purposes are from their very nature opposed to each other.

Hogarth argues that the serpentine line he conceives himself to have discovered as the essence of Beauty is the key to the whole question ; that all things containing Beauty must be composed chiefly of it—must represent it either in their forms or in their movements ; and that in all combinations of Beauty, whether of Nature or Art, this line must prevail.

I would advise you to read him : he is right ; but in my opinion right only as far as he goes. His view is a limited one, applicable perhaps in a minor degree to Art, but involving in no way that general view of the question I am anxious the student should take. Were everything in Nature to bend itself, or be bent, in the direction of this line, what a sameness would be produced ; and I can scarcely conceive that increase of Beauty would in any way take place. Arguments such as he uses, though good enough in themselves as laying bare certain portions of a question, create a disinclination to examine it as a whole, and so narrow the boundaries within which the artist works or the philosopher thinks. Hogarth has picked up a stray piece of the truth, and carrying it home to his studio, has converted it to his own use, without inquiring to what it belonged, or from whence it was derived : nevertheless he argues well as far as that fragment will allow him ; he admits utility to be the key to the argument, and lays great stress on variety, which he illustrates by curious examples, such as the sticking of patches on a lady's face irregularly. His writings are in fact more interesting from their portraying so visibly the character of his paintings and the manners of his day than for any very profound searching into the question he is discussing. He takes it up as an artist, and confines himself in it to what concerns his profession. Many of the examples, too, of what he considers as belonging to Beauty appertain really to fashion, or to what is quite as bad in Art—affectation ; but I think you will agree with me that in his paintings, great as they are in other respects, there is nothing of what we understand by the words pure, simple Beauty. He hardly was able to feel the value of that, and the time in which he lived was adverse to it. Nature was

then either hidden from sight under the mask of fashion, or rendered squalid by the effects of poverty and vice—at any rate, it was under these two aspects that he alone viewed her ; and considering the powerful moral he drew out of her, it was the better for his fame that he did : but what was meat to him was poison to the sculptor. Fashion is bad enough even when introduced into Hogarth's work, where it is made to tell for a purpose ; but of all vices destructive to real Beauty, affectation is the worst. It takes away that unconsciousness which is one of its greatest charms, and seems to ask for an admiration which, for the very reason that it is asked, you are inclined to deny. Affectation appears to me to be easily defined, and therefore easily avoided. It consists in making the action or expression of your figure greater than the cause indicated requires, and in creating an appearance of its being more interested in the mode of doing its work than in the work itself. It is the over-display of the very line Hogarth so advocates. The motive is different : not the end to be accomplished by the act, but the display of personal attractions supposed to exist in the doing of it. For this reason Sculpture, which aims more particularly at simple Beauty, should, of all the branches of Art, avoid it. The student should read Hogarth's writings, understand what he means by his line of Beauty, and never entirely lose sight of it ; but he should not place it so uppermost in his mind as to become the primary instead of a secondary object. If he does, what he puts forth will be affectation also, for his motive will be a display of his own personal powers rather than the expression of what is intended by the nature of his subject.

The principal study of the sculptor is the human figure, and to understand clearly in what consists its excellence or Beauty



is one of the most important lessons he has to learn. Let us test it by the rule I have laid down—that Beauty is utility, or, to put it to you in words more applicable to your Art, that the Beauty of your work must lie in the representing all the organs of the living being you are endeavouring to portray in the state most suited to the use they are intended for. I must say, first of all, that the following out of this rule does not lead to exaggeration.

There is a balance of parts in the figure of man which tends to the carrying out of purpose better than an undue magnitude of any one faculty, an overwhelming increase of which would lead to the destruction of others. This law, applicable to everything, is more particularly so to him, as he is of a compound nature, constituted of many powers, and consequently in no one so great as other animals, made with one faculty chiefly developed in them ; yet it is by these combined powers that he becomes the master-work of creation. You will ask, If this Beauty of which you speak is utility, how is it that man is not twice as large, twice as strong, twice as wise as he is? You acknowledge a purpose, surely that purpose would be doubly carried out by double means, and, according to what you assert, a double Beauty be created. Neither would be the case. He is, it is true, made to be monarch of all he surveys, but he is, after all, only a sort of viceroy, a part of a still greater system, of a more comprehensive whole.

Were more powerful faculties allotted to him, he would resemble those fabled giants of old who endeavoured to upset the laws of the universe and assail heaven by their brute force, instead of being—as he is now, even in spite of himself—a regulator of that balance which runs through all Nature. In

taking him thus separately, you are again considering a part instead of a whole. There is sufficient in him as he is to illustrate my theory that Beauty is utility. Examine him from head to foot, and you will find the two, Beauty and Utility, running hand to hand all through. His head is on high, above that of all other creatures, that he may look out straight forward on the world ; his features are compact, contained within the smallest possible compass, that none may be liable to injury ; his eyes deeply set under his brow to protect them from the light, and that they again may be exposed as little as possible to danger ; his nose, for the same reason, may be said to be most beautiful when, like that of the Greek statues, it is perpendicular, with little or no projection, and so less exposed to injury ; his mouth comparatively small, from his requiring it only for the mastication of food, and not, like other carnivorous animals, for the seizing of its prey ; his hands, perhaps of all his features the most beautifully formed, not only answer this purpose, but many others, such as indicating, feeling, &c.: they are placed independently by his side, not required, like the limbs of other creatures, for sustaining the body or for promoting movement, but at liberty to perform whatever the will may dictate through the nerves ; while his feet are finished by a fringe of toes that render his step firm and prehensile, and make him safe on that small space on which he stands, and which give him such superiority over the lower animals, who have to describe a larger circle in their turnings. You must have observed how, without any exception, the chest is represented in antique Sculpture, large and full, square and prominent, to a degree which is at least not common among ourselves, who, generally speaking, pay less attention to physical education and to the

full development of personal strength in our youthful days. Not even in such effeminate figures as the Antinous is this departed from. This must have been done not merely because the Greeks and Romans cultivated by their athletic games more numerous examples of this kind of Beauty, but because they knew that to be strong, to be healthy and useful, a man must have ample room for his breathing apparatus as well as for the organ for the circulation of the blood through the system, or at any rate, as they were not then supposed to have made the Harveian discovery, for that palpitation which they were aware continued on all occasions, and was increased after violent exertion of every kind. You will recollect that their authors tell us it was only when the youths in their games had gained the victory three times that a statue was erected of them, representing as near as possible their actual form and figure—a sure indication that they looked upon Beauty and power as one and the same thing, and that they did their best to cultivate both.

You have in your Antique Academy a cast of a statue alluded to by Pliny which appears to me one of this kind and of exquisite Beauty, yet not wholly devoid in its proportions of individuality. It is supposed to represent, and has been designated as the Runner, from the length of the legs. Our jockeys study after a like fashion their favourite animal. They call what they admire, and what they seek to produce by breeding, the points of a horse ; but it is much the same thing, Beauty and Utility combined : and by devoting what little brain they possess to the subject, they manage to obtain a fine animal, with elegance of form and power of action. This again, following the old custom, they perpetuate by a portrait when successful. They seem to be more earnest in their endeavours

to obtain perfection on their ground than we sculptors are on ours, for these portraits come so completely up to their standard of excellence that there appears to me no difference between any of them. Individuality seems lost or absorbed in that ideality of which they are such enthusiastic advocates. I have heard of a painter of race-horse portraits, who could give a likeness of a Derby winner without ever seeing the animal at all, and who only required to be informed of his colour and of how many white fetlocks he had, if any ; perhaps, too, he had to ascertain whether there was a spot in the middle of his forehead,—of the horse I mean.

You must acknowledge, I think, that here the two, Beauty and Utility, go together ; the only objection we can make is, that while the utility is shown as a fact by the result, the idea that Beauty accompanies it is an artificial one created within ourselves, and arising out of our own associations with the fact. This may be true ; we are convinced that the intention or purpose is accomplished in a greater degree where such-and-such qualities are present, and the satisfaction we receive from that success gives us a pleasure which we associate with and attribute to the forms themselves. All mental sensations are more or less matters of association—associations which it is very difficult, if not quite impossible, altogether to separate.

I might go on with the illustration of my theory that Beauty is utility by pointing out that in mankind—the most perfect specimen of Beauty in Nature—utility is carried to a higher extent than in any other class of beings. I might speak of his compactness of shape, by which he possesses greater variety of action, if not greater power in any one of them. I might say that our structure enables us to run with the stag and to swim with the

fish, to live in a greater variety of climate, to provide a greater number of things necessary to us, and even to suffer for a time circumstances under which no other animal could exist : but I will claim, as aiding me in my argument, that illness, the effect of luxury, or any other vice, not only tends to destroy Beauty in the human form, but to do away with the power of performing the functions allotted to it. We recognize at once the deterioration of Beauty when this takes place, though we have no fixed rule, independent of association of ideas, that tells us that one is pleasing to the eye and desirable, and the other is not.

This leads me to another source from whence the sensation of Beauty is derived. What we call causes are in themselves but the effects of other causes, less apparent and more remote : we see the nearest, as it most concerns us, but do not look back to the other, for the reason that it belongs to the more general order of Nature, and does not apply immediately to ourselves.

The belief that utility is Beauty, and Beauty utility, is the more proximate one, as well as the most applicable to the study of the artist ; and the results which the sculptor will arrive at by the consideration of each in unison with the other are all that his Art requires : they will lead him towards the Temple of Beauty by an easy road which, otherwise than this, has no direction-posts beyond figures standing by the wayside, who, unless he lay down for himself some principle of this kind, speak, perhaps, in a language he cannot understand.

I have for this reason put it to you as a source of Beauty, but I must not have you believe that it is the primary source, or that you are at your journey's end. You may rest here, and quench your thirst at the fountain of Truth ; but if you wish to go the whole road, or at any rate as far back as possible to the

great first cause least understood, you must proceed further : you must take into your thoughts the question whether there is not a faculty placed within all Nature which attracts towards itself the beautiful and repels the ugly or defective.

I put this to your consideration briefly, because it is beyond the line of demarcation within which I am bound to keep—my Art ; but it is worth to you, even as artists, a moment's reflection. It is Darwin's theory put into different words. Whether you believe in him or not is no concern of mine here. I am not ashamed myself of saying that I do, and that I consider him one of the profoundest philosophers of his time ; and for this reason I would have you read him : you will, whether you go with him altogether, only in part, or not at all, be the better for it—better even in your Art, for it will teach you to see Beauty in things which you may perhaps, from ignorance of their propriety, have deemed ugly. He will show you, or teach you to find by inference, Beauty in almost all creation—Beauty, if not in every individual specimen of Nature, as a part of a whole where Beauty presides. If you follow him, you will have to acknowledge, too, what with the rest is equally a truth, namely, that there are not only different degrees of Beauty, but different degrees in the power of perceiving the Beautiful.

What is beautiful to us may make no impression of the kind with the lower animals. We are supposed to possess an intellect that enables us to study the construction, and understand in part the formation of everything that is put before us ; we make use of much, if not all, that surrounds us, and by comprehending its make and its meaning, are enabled to bring it more into our service. In the limited sphere in which other living creatures move, they have only to find Beauty in the

class to which they belong, and the reverse in those which their nature calls upon them to avoid. Ask the toad what is Beauty, and he will tell you it is his mate. This is an old saying, and if you look upon it in this light you will find more philosophy in it than you at first imagined. You will tell me, perhaps, this is instinct ; and I will say to you in return, that I know of no meaning to the word except limited reason, though I am aware that some translate it differently.

The untutored eye is apt, I think, to be offended at the sight of many objects made, as everything is, with perfect suitability to purpose, because it cannot perceive the Beauty that is in them ; while the educated one looks with pleasure on them, from understanding their habits, the places they have to fill, and the contrast they form to other objects by which they are surrounded.

Beauty is often derived in Nature from association, and it may be gained in Art by the same means, in the like manner as it may be heightened by contrast. The elephant in its narrow cage is a huge, unwieldy creature, awkward in his movements, ungainly in his form, discordant even in his voice ; but when he rears his trunk on high in his native forests he becomes from his ponderous size a part of the sublime, which is only a higher or more religious order of Beauty. The lean, lanky camel, with his straggling shape, seems to possess, when with us, but little claim to Beauty ; yet, when traversing the bare, sandy plains of his own country, and seen against the lurid sky that belongs to it, must present a long, undulating line and stately movement of the grandest and most effective kind—a line which even squatty little Hogarth would acknowledge to be beautiful : his spongy feet, suited to the soft, yet hot ground on which he

is doomed to tread, become there beautiful from their appropriateness ; while his long limbs, unconnected by flanks that the air may pass freely over and under him, and so relieve him as far as possible from the effects of heat, show to the student who understands, that he is the work of the Creator of the Beautiful. Associations are not always of a material kind. Forms that of themselves afford little or no pleasure may connect themselves with poetry, suggest histories of the past, excite religious feelings, or bring back remembrances on which the mind loves to dwell. They may be made, when thus united, to appeal through the eye as sound does through the ear, and so become the music of your Art. I do not mean to say exactly that this is a part of that omnipresent Beauty I am endeavouring to explain to you ; it is one you create within yourselves, belonging perhaps to that intuitive power given to you of deriving pleasure from everything that surrounds you. If so, it comes in with the rest in aid of that love of the Beautiful which is planted within us for the improvement of our race. But the observation is not wholly of an impracticable nature in your Art : on the contrary, it may be used to the gaining great emphasis in your work, to the raising up, by the magic of association the highest thoughts of the beholder, and to the bringing forth a Beauty, indefinite it is true, but for that reason not the less real. It is with this feeling that I would have you as artists look upon Nature ; you will then find but little in her that is not beautiful, and that little you will learn to take as a contrast which heightens the sense of what is beautiful, and so keeps the appetite for it eager and healthy.

I might illustrate this to you by alluding to a style of Art which prevailed for a short time, but which, from the want of



this contrast, and the variety consequent on it, is now but little thought of.

The French painter, David, well acquainted with the correct proportions of the human figure, endeavoured to reduce all his figures to his one rule of Beauty ; to make every one whomsoever he might represent, of the same length and breadth, and all his faces of the same character—at least when portraying ideal men and women, and often when treating of portraiture. The eye feels, when contemplating his productions, that they are false to Nature, that one Beauty in her, variety, is absent, and so turns away from them disappointed. We have had amongst ourselves one, if not more artists who have fallen into the same error. Westall was a man by no means without talent, and yet his figures, from the want of this variety, impress us with the idea of being mere automats : he painted but one being, now a child, now a youth, and now an old man ; but always one and the same creature, differing only in age, and in the circumstances in which it was placed. Howard, who had great imagination, great power of design, in my opinion was led astray in the same manner. It is probable that these men failed comparatively, not from lack of ability, but from want of a comprehensive view of the word Beauty ; they looked upon it as a something to be extracted from all around and concentrated into one shape or form which should at all times be alike.

Not so did the old Greek sculptors. They studied Nature as a whole, saw in her the charm created by variety, and knew that without it they could not convey in their works the same impression ; they considered merely what were the faculties necessary to each individual subject they had in hand, and how best those faculties were to be represented, or the impression of

them best conveyed to the spectator. There does not seem to me any similarity, beyond the circumstance that both are human, between the softened-down, indistinct anatomy of the Apollo Belvidere, and the agony-marked muscles of the Laocoon; the one is a divergence from the other in feeling, in treatment, in Beauty, in everything. In the antique, the Fighting Gladiator is distinct from the Discobolon, and still more distinct from the effeminate Antinous.

The matronly Niobe in no way resembles the Milo Venus, any more than the latter does the Medici charmer: each is beautiful in itself, and increases its Beauty by being a full and faithful type of the phase it represents. If I am right in this view, it will show, I think, the student how necessary it is to well consider these questions, and to make up his mind upon them. The proper settling of them leads on Art of every kind; men in the commencement take only a partial view of them, but by degrees, by experience, arrive at a clearer one. I do not mean to tell you that I have got to the end of the question I am now discussing, but by putting before you my ideas, you may probably progress a step further, and by comparison arrive at something still better, more correct. The refuting a false theory will sometimes help to prove a true one.

You may object to all this, by telling me that I am no further on with my subject than when I first began, and that I have given you nothing of service; but I hope I have shown you that this is the key-note which must run through all the music of your Art, and that it will be the standing-place from whence you will send forth all you may produce in a calling which pretends to give Beauty by selection, and to represent Nature in her various classes, and not by her individual examples.

By studying how each of these classes is constructed, what is the separate purpose for which it is formed, and what are the peculiar means it possesses to carry out that purpose, you will learn to exhibit in your model all those excellences combined, you will show the being you wish to represent in its most complete state, and with none of those deficiencies arising from weakness or other defects that belong to individuals rather than to a class, and have nothing to do with the general character of it. Your work, whatever it may be, will thus become what is called classical, or more properly the beautiful of its kind. To do this you must study, not the individual being you are copying, but the class to which it belongs, whether man or beast; for without such study you cannot understand how its frame is adapted to the fulfilment of what it is called upon to do in life, and how it differs from others who have different duties to perform and different places to occupy: you will thus, too, be relieved to a certain extent from the study of the antique, which is, after all, only a translation, and be able to read the lesson in the original language of Nature herself.

Whatever is the subject you are endeavouring to model, looking at it as a class, you will find there is a Beauty in it belonging to itself and differing from all others, and that that Beauty, whether of shape or colour, is its propriety, its adaptability to an end, its utility.







THE MOTHER'S KISS. An Ideal Work.

*H. Wecker, R.A.*



#### LECTURE IV.

### TASTE.



THE old saying, "*De gustibus non est disputandum*," seems to imply that there is no principle that can be laid down on the word Taste—that we recognize it when present without knowing in what it consists or from whence it is derived. This is, to a certain extent, true; for what is good Taste in one work of Art becomes exactly the contrary in another, and thus it is that its natural shape is so difficult to define. I will endeavour, however, as far as possible to lay down certain rules respecting it, and will venture to state, first of all, that Taste is an attribute of Beauty, and then go further into the question. I will ask you to admit that Taste is a quality appertaining to Beauty in various ways: to her dress and other accessories, to her movements and actions, to the modulations of her voice, to the sentiments uttered by that voice, as well as the terms employed for conveying those sentiments. It may be said to be a grace imparted by the education of the mind to the body which reflects itself back from the body to the mind. The only basis for the much-used Latin sentence is, that Taste has no principle; that it is of such a vague, fickle, and uncertain character, that no foundation can

be made for it, no definition given of it, no rule applied to it by which the true can be distinguished from the false : in short, that every one must be allowed to settle questions relating to it according to his own whims and fancies, without either previous consideration or study. This, in fact, is its meaning. Reynolds says of people of this way of thinking that they suppose that their powers are intuitive, that under the name of genius great works are produced, and under the name of Taste an exact judgment is given, without knowing why, and without being under the least obligation to reason, precept, or experience.

I remember hearing once a conversation between Chantrey and the great Duke of Wellington, who had come to visit his studio, and more particularly to look at an equestrian statue. Chantrey, who on such occasions was always anxious to impress his visitor with his wisdom, made a long speech to the Duke, explaining in many words his reason for representing the horse standing quietly with all his feet on the ground, alleging, perhaps with some amount of good sense, that it gave the rider more importance. To this the Duke replied, somewhat curtly, "Mr. Wyatt makes his horse galloping, and you make your horse standing still, and it is all a matter of Taste altogether." The answer was not a profound one, though it may be said to illustrate the practical character of the Duke, who always took a straightforward view of every question, and who probably felt that Taste was not one he was called upon to study or decide. It represents, too, a very general opinion on the matter, and even of some writers on the subject, who argue that, because each race of mankind has its own standard of beauty, because the African likes that of his lady-love better than any other kind,

there can be no definition or decision on matters of Taste; forgetting that man increases in beauty as he rises in intellect.

There are but few writers on Taste in English literature. Addison is among the earliest, though he says but little about it, and that little relates mostly to the manners and customs of what was then termed polite society. He is right, nevertheless, in the ninety-third number of the "Spectator," where he says: "A man that has a taste for music, painting, and architecture, is like one that has another sense when compared with such as have no relish for those Arts." His Taste, however, or perhaps I had better say the Taste of the period, was, whether with regard to literature or Art, of a pompous, inflated kind; a system of gross adulation and flattery prevailed through both. I will give you a specimen from a poem by him on Sir Godfrey Kneller's picture of George I., wherein he says, speaking of the likeness of that monarch on his coins—

"To bear this form, the genial sun  
Has daily, since his course begun,  
Rejoiced the metal to refine,  
And ripen'd the Peruvian mine."

This, though not perhaps deemed too much in that day, especially coming from a man who held high offices under Government, would now, I fancy, be considered, to use a vulgar term, as coming it too strong; but if we endeavour to call back the manners of that day, and some time after—the dress, the ceremonies of the Court, the rigid line of demarcation kept up between the different grades of society, the over-florid style of oratory practised in public debates, the heavy, but profusely decorated vehicles used for conveyance of the rich—made, as it would seem, expressly to move slowly, in order that they might



be gazed at by the low and abject ; if, in short, though speaking of English Taste, we recollect that we have, not long since, passed through the period of the gorgeous Louis XIV., in whose school decoration became the end in Art instead of a secondary aid, and when people seemed to move more for the sake of attitudinizing, and displaying their dress and ornaments, than for the sake of the real purposes for which life and movement were given them, we shall find everything of a piece. Taste had degraded herself, not from poverty or distress, but from over-luxury and abuse. Works of Art were made solely to carry a load of ornament which, in Art-manufactures, often obstructed, rather than aided, their purposes. We may take a hint on this point from Nature herself, the Mistress of Taste, who introduces no feature for the sake of decoration alone, but who makes everything at one and the same time agreeable to the eye, and suited to its use. It is true that in colour there is often a variety which serves only to give pleasure to the beholder, and where, as far as we know, a dull monotony would, for everything else, do as well ; but that neither crowds the surface as ornament does in the Louis XIV. school, nor interferes with the distinct expression of each part.

Literature in those days went crawling on her knees in the dedication of her works to the great and powerful, and Art strained its imagination until it lost all bounds and ran into the absurd and ridiculous to compliment them in her pictures and to commemorate them in her monuments. Literary independence was not redeemed until a much later period. Honest old Johnson dealt a hearty blow for it in his letter to Lord Chesterfield, a letter which ought to be printed in gold ; and Burns gave the final help in the dedication of his works to the

noblemen and gentlemen of the Caledonian Hunt, wherein he says, after addressing them in courteous but manly language, "I was bred to the plough, and am independent." I have accused Literature of debasing herself, but I cannot say much better for Art: her outrageous allegories are well described by Addison in the following lines from his poem to William III. :—

"Thus, when the forming Muse would copy forth  
A perfect pattern of heroic worth,  
She sets a man triumphant in the field  
O'er giants cloven down, and monsters kill'd,  
Reeking in blood, and smear'd with dust and sweat,  
Whilst angry gods conspire to make him great."

The affected attitudes, misappropriations of material, and fulsome epitaphs then used in Sculpture may be seen and read in all our public buildings. Westminster Abbey is full of them, and there is a monument to the great Duke of Marlborough in the chapel at Blenheim which surpasses them all in bad Taste. All that, however, is past: *nous avons changé tout cela*. Mr. Addison, you may stand down; your writings are well enough for the time you lived in, but what was then thought Taste seems to us now mere bombast and affectation. In your day it assumed a bold, obtrusive character, whereas true Taste, as we have since learnt to feel, should always be of a modest nature—should assert itself in a diffident, retiring manner—not as claiming our chief attention, nor as pretending to be the primary object, but as a sort of cheerful helper, contented never to intrude itself, but to be found when sought for; willing to make things pleasant by seeing that everything is in order, and removing any incongruous dirt or rubbish that may be lying about—a patient servant, not a domineering master.

Curiously enough, among the early writers of our Academy whose works are published, Reynolds is the only one who takes Taste singly and by itself for his subject, though the word occurs, of course, in all of them. Can this be urged as a proof of its evanescent nature? He speaks well, however, upon it, as he does on most, if not all things. In the seventh discourse of Sir Joshua, and in the seventh paragraph, you will find these words: "To speak of genius and Taste as in any way connected with reason or common sense would be, in the opinion of some towering talkers, to speak like a man who possessed neither; who had never felt that enthusiasm—or, to use their own inflated language, was never warmed by that Promethean fire—which animates the canvas or vivifies the marble." A text is often given twice, why should I not do so on this occasion?—the words are quite worthy of it: "To speak of genius and Taste as in any way connected with reason or common sense would be, in the opinion of some towering talkers, to speak like a man who possessed neither; who had never felt that enthusiasm—or, to use their own inflated language, was never warmed by that Promethean fire—which animates the canvas or vivifies the marble." We may agree with this, as it admits that Taste is amenable to reason and submissive to rules, and not that wayward creature she is so often represented to be; and we will not attempt to cross-examine Sir Joshua, as we shall probably not gain anything by it: he deals in generalities, and the official reserve appertaining to him as President of the Royal Academy will, there is no doubt, protect him from any question we can put to him.

Having summoned Reynolds, I must call up Hogarth, for otherwise the fiery little man will be jealous, and he is not one

to offend, as Churchill and Wilkes would tell you were they here. You will know him when he comes before you from the portrait painted by himself, where he is represented seated, and working at his canvas with an earnestness that puts us all to shame ; and by the admirable bust of him by Roubiliac, both in our National Portrait Gallery. The bust I would advise you as sculptor-students to look well at, not merely for the fine modelling, but for the real energy it displays, and the quaint costume of the head : it brings the man strongly before you with all his peculiarities, and, as should all good portraiture, brings also the time itself in which he lived.

Diverging a little from the subject in hand, I may say, indeed, that I feel there are not only dresses, but faces, which betray in themselves the periods to which they belong. This remark—though perhaps out of place here, but which, as appertaining to character, comes so naturally when speaking of Hogarth—must of course be taken *cum grano* ; but it is nevertheless true, and the reason may be given for it without any great departure from sound logic. If certain modes of thinking prevail, if certain vices predominate in individuals, every physiognomist will acknowledge that they leave their stamp on the face of the thinker or sinner, and if on the individual, why not more or less on the whole ? To take an extreme case, carry your memory back to the days of Charles II. ; not only is the head of the King himself strongly expressive of his tendencies, but you will find among many of his satellites the same characteristics. Friend Pepys partakes of them, and he acknowledges himself in his writings to be somewhat addicted to strong drink, and is described as a man having experienced softness.

Returning to Hogarth, with whom we are now dealing, he calls

his book "The Analysis of Beauty, written with a view of fixing the fluctuating ideas on Taste;" a bold title, not that he can for a moment be accused of wanting Taste: the way, indeed, in which in his "Marriage à la Mode" he ridicules the prevailing rage for mutilated mock antiques, Dresden china, and other *virtuosi* curiosities, shows that he had a soul superior to the follies of his day, and capable of conceiving something of a higher nature than what was then in vogue among the *cognoscenti*.

It should be recollected, however, that the works he executed belonging to the higher walks of Art, where pure Taste and unimpaired beauty are more particularly required, were exactly those in which he failed: the simply natural was indeed so hidden under the highly artificial in his time, that it can hardly be expected he should have a clear conception of its being the very essence of true Taste and beauty. I will give you an example of his mode of arguing illustrative of this. He says: "Let any one chalk the line (here he refers to one of his diagrams) on a flat surface, beginning at either end, and he will move his hand and arm in a beautiful direction; but if he chalks the same sort of line on an ogee moulding of a foot or two in breadth, his hand must move in that more beautiful direction which is distinguished by the name of grace, and according to the quantity given to those lines, greatness will be added to grace, and the movement will be more or less noble." He then goes on: "Gentle movements of this sort, thus understood, may be made at any time and anywhere, which, by repetition, will become so familiar to the parts exercised, that on proper occasion they make them as it were of their own accord."

This appears to me the true teaching of the dancing-master;

the making of a so-called graceful line the end and aim of an action or movement, so pernicious to all principles of pure Taste, so opposite to the proceeding of Nature, who always depends for her mode of doing a thing upon the impulse given by the thing itself, and never thinks of how she does it, or how she is looking whilst doing it. The dancing-master is as far off in his teaching of graceful action, or, in other words, in the inculcating of true Taste, as is the most boorish clown; farther, perhaps, for as he has gone beyond it into the region of affectation, he is never likely to turn back, whereas the other may possibly be advancing towards it. True Taste is the result of education, but it is not the education of the body but the general education of the mind which imparts unconsciously its own refinement to the movements of the body, and so distinguishes in appearance and manner the real gentleman from the uneducated lout. But let Hogarth go on with his own story. He proceeds soon after with these words: "As to the motion of the head, the awe most children are in before strangers till they come to a certain age is the cause of their dropping and drawing their chins down into their breasts and looking under their foreheads as if conscious of their own weakness, or of something wrong about them. To prevent this awkward shyness, parents and tutors are continually teasing them to hold up their heads, which, if they get them to do, it is with difficulty, and, of course, in so constrained a manner that it gives them pain, so that they naturally take all opportunities of easing themselves by holding down their heads, which posture would be fully as uneasy to them were it not a relief from restraint. There is another misfortune in holding down the head, that it is apt to make them bend too much in the back; when this happens to

be the case they then have recourse to steel collars and other machines, all which shacklings are repugnant to nature, and may make the body grow crooked. This daily fatigue both to the children and parents may be avoided, and an ugly habit prevented, by only, at a proper age, fastening a ribbon to a quantity of plaited hair, or to the cap so as it may be kept just in its place, and the other end to the back of the coat, of such a length as may prevent them drawing their chins into their necks, which ribbon will always leave the head at liberty to move in any direction but this awkward one they are so apt to fall into." Strange to say, the man who indited this foolish stuff writes immediately after: "But till children arrive at a reasoning age, it will be difficult by any means to teach them more grace than what is natural to every well-made child at liberty." It would be difficult indeed!

Sir Joshua Reynolds, the finest painter of children in the English, if not in any school, who entered into—old bachelor as he was—all the graceful feelings, all the unaffected movements of infancy, and who painted childhood in all its innocent simplicity, would agree with him in this difficulty—would tell him, perhaps, that of all their engaging actions there was none more so than the one he wishes to put an end to in this barbarous and tasteless manner; but Sir Joshua could paint a child, whilst Hogarth never, that I am aware of, attempted one, at least not one having the joyous, healthy spirit of the young within it. From the works of Reynolds sculptors may learn much in the way of Taste. "Mrs. Siddons as the Tragic Muse" would, if well translated into marble, make one of the finest statues known; and all his portraits become representations of high-bred people, not from the presence, but by the absence of all

affectation. From the satirical style of Hogarth sculptors can gain nothing, it is totally opposed to the pure feeling for Taste which they are called upon to advocate in their Art ; nor have they anything to do with the absurd customs of his day : we are becoming less artificial, have left off bob-wigs and twisted queues, have ceased to dock horses tails, and almost to cut dogs ears, have learned, or are learning, that Nature knows how to construct her creatures so that neither addition nor subtraction on our part can improve them either in appearance or for use—are in short approaching, though slowly, to that feeling for pure Taste, and those simple forms more particularly applicable to the Art of Sculpture. Of this cutting and maiming of Nature there is one example in antique Art, and only one. The hog manes in the horses of Night and Morning of the Parthenon, and in the frieze of the same temple. No doubt the fashion prevailed in the best time of Greek Art, for we find it frequently resorted to in their marbles : the sculptor's excuse, I presume, for this apparent departure from good Taste, would be that it enabled him to give a clear, decided line that would tell at a distance, and to avoid minutiae which would under the same circumstances create confusion.

Looking to those works in which Hogarth really excelled, he may be said to have had sufficient Taste to prevent his being vulgar in any case except where he wished to make vice more ugly by that vulgarity. His book, it must be confessed, indicates a hard struggle to free himself from the fashionable ideas on Beauty and Taste then prevailing ; but they were too strong for him. Not too strong when with his palette in hand he put forth his bitter satire on the vices and follies of his day, but too strong when he took up his pen to lay down rules for a Taste



that should survive all the pollutions of fashion, and become from its own principles perpetual. The student should have illustrations before him when studying his writings, which I would quite advise him to do. The work I believe is to be found in the Academy Library.

To Hogarth too belongs the credit of being the first of the many essayists who wrote on Taste. At or soon after his period Reynolds, Burke, Alison, and Payne Knight: the two last, and the latter in particular, seem to labour to tread in his footsteps; but they both bring so much to bear upon it, that the footmarks themselves become effaced by the multitude of things that are brought to travel over the road, and so leave no impression behind them. You will agree with me that lectures are often too long; I am sure these men's writings are. The analysis they undertake is so complicated, that it sometimes appears to me a stirring up of the mud which makes the stream less transparent, rather than a sweeping away of the weeds so as to render the depths clearer and more visible. Alison divides the various theories on Taste into two classes. The first he describes as that which resolves the emotion of Taste directly into an original law of our nature; which supposes a sense or senses by which the qualities of Beauty and Sublimity are perceived and felt as their appropriate objects, and concludes that the genuine object of the Arts of Taste is to discover and imitate those qualities. To this first class he says belongs almost all the theories of Music, Architecture, and Sculpture resorted to by artists, and those whose habits of thought lead them to attend more to the causes of their emotions than to the nature of the emotions themselves. The second he describes as that which resists the idea of any new or peculiar

sense; and supposes some one known and acknowledged principle, or affection of mind, to be the foundation of all the emotions we receive from objects of Taste. This hypothesis he declares to be most natural to retired and philosophic minds; to those whose habits have led them to attend more to the nature of the emotions than to the causes which produced them.

He then declares his intention to employ in his inquiries illustrations derived from Nature rather than Art, justifying himself by saying that if the Fine Arts are in reality Arts of imitation, their principles are to be sought for in the subjects which they imitate. He goes on to speak of the power association of ideas has on our appreciation of the Beautiful; declaring, I think properly, that this association, as appealing to the imagination rather than the judgment, is stronger in the young than in the old, where sensibility has been weakened by more criticizing habits of the mind. This he illustrates by allusions to scenes in Nature which derive Beauty and Power from their connection with glorious deeds and great events; or by their affinity to the earlier and happier days of the spectator. He declares that hues and forms, and even colours and sounds, have no inherent Beauty in themselves beyond that of fitness, but are agreeable to the eye or ear only as we associate them with pleasant ideas. For example, we admire the undulating forms because they are expressive of flexibility, of tenderness, and weakness: and that angular and rugged forms are disagreeable, not from their own self-constituted properties, but because they represent rigidity, immovability, and opposition. In short, he seems to lay down association of ideas as the key to all those emotions of pleasure or the reverse, which we receive from the contemplation of objects, whether of Nature or Art: and these

emotions of Taste he describes as of a complex character, as consisting of a pleasure which excites the imagination, and so raises a continuous train of thought within the mind, in distinction to a simple sensation such as joy, grief, &c., where no such train of thought follows. One or other of these many simple sensations must first, he declares, be produced, for to them does the more complex one of Taste owe its existence. I would have you read him, for I believe he is, after all, the best writer on the word Taste we have ; and if he argues in a different manner from what you, as artists, naturally expect, I must remind you that he places himself among those thinkers of the second class, those, as he says, whose habits have led them to attend more to the nature of the emotions than to the causes which produce them.

Artist writers like Hogarth, Reynolds, and others, stand naturally in the other class, but it does not follow that their method is the best, though I admit the difficulty of professional men pursuing ideas and modes of argument which tend so thoroughly to upset their preconceived notions. I would advise your studying both methods : the first class, to which artists belong, is of course the simplest, perhaps the most practical, the most serviceable to their calling ; but I fancy the latter goes deeper into the question of Taste, and lays more open the basis upon which it is founded. At any rate, you will have become greater travellers in the paths of truth by paying attention to them both. He concludes his argument on this portion of his subject by saying that the object of the Fine Arts is to produce this emotion of Taste, and that the only subjects that are in themselves proper for the imitation of these Arts, are such as are productive of some species of simple emotion ; and that where

the subjects are of a contrary kind, the method by which alone they can be rendered either beautiful or sublime is by the addition of some interesting or affecting quality.

I gave you in my last lectures a case in point in the *Dying Gladiator*, though the association was, I confess, in that instance, distant ; brought to bear upon the statue as much by the genius of the poet whom I quoted to you, as from any direct intention in the sculptor.

I will now give you another case of a more modern work, which association of ideas has rendered more than usually popular, and where the credit of that association is due to the artist alone—Turner's towing up of the old "*Fighting Téméraire*.' The sun setting on the calm water in this splendid picture speaks of the peaceful end of its glorious career, whilst the moon faintly indicated amid the fading light, tells of the coming night and hours of rest. The blood-red reflection on the water and the flag still faintly fluttering at the mast-head, remind one of the battle and the breeze, whilst the little tug dragging up with busy force the mighty leviathan, seems to suggest the finishing of war and the coming of more happy days of peaceful industry. Turner, rough and ungainly as was his exterior, was inwardly both a poet and a painter.

I will not venture to discuss his great merits as a colourist, for were I to do so your Chairman would rise up from his seat and stop my presumption ; but will content myself with saying that he rarely omitted the use of association in his magnificent works. He was right. There is nothing that renders Art so impressive, or that makes it cling so long and so closely to the memory. Let me give you another instance, belonging this time to Sculpture. In the Palazzo Torlonia near Rome, there

is, or rather was before the revolution, when it may have been destroyed, a curious head and naked torso, representing *Æsop*, who was, as you know, deformed. The body is so truthful in its representation, that it may even possibly have been copied in the marble from a cast from Nature; so correct is it in all its details that you can trace with ease the various twistings of the parts under the skin, and satisfy yourself how they have been obliged to make room one for another in their ill-constructed home, so as to dwell together in peaceful harmony, after their rough tumble into life. The head, however, partakes in no way of this distortion; on the contrary, it is of the most elegant kind, its refinement heightened by that beseeching expression common to such unfortunate beings, which seems to plead so strongly, though silently, for sympathy. What was the sculptor to do in this case? He could not represent him as a strong, well-made man, for that would have been false altogether, and to modify the evil would only be going half-way, which would have nullified all effect. There remained but one alternative: to speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, as if upon oath in open court. And he has done so, leaving that truth to work out its own effect by calling up appropriate thoughts and associations in those more happily situated, or who may have a chord within their own hearts similarly unstrung. He has done well. It is one of the most impressive productions I ever remember: with the ignorant and unfeeling it sometimes, perhaps, raises a smile; but I believe it causes many a sigh from persons more seriously inclined and better acquainted with grief. The mind immediately turns, when contemplating this fragment, to the history of the poor unshapen slave, unhappy, as St. Jerome says of him, in his birth, unhappy

in his life, and unhappy in his death, but whose talent eventually served, as far as we can learn, to free him from his bonds, and to send him as a trusty envoy from a king to a neighbouring Power. Recollections of his genius recur associated with our earliest thoughts and happiest days: the croaking frogs rise again to the surface of our memory, discontented once more with their Log King, and obtaining to their sorrow King Stork. We have still, I fear, our wolves in sheeps' clothing, though we do not follow Æsop's example of hanging them; and some of us yet, like the poor dog, let go our meat to catch at a shadow. His fables are still clear and distinct in our remembrance; their insight into human nature, so true, so pleasant to read, imparted to us under such quaint shapes, tinged, perhaps slightly, with a bitterness that ever belongs to genius under misfortune, making their satire more pungent, and even more delightful to our imagination. This is powerful association.

Payne Knight is not a writer that I can well recommend for your study; he appears to me of all others anxious to accumulate words, to multiply them for the sake of lengthening, not strengthening, his argument; and I scarcely think he adds much information on the question. He seems to me, too, to be more desirous to refute Burke in his opinions than to get at the truth; against him he appears, in fact, to have had something very like a personal spite, as well as a sneaking sycophancy towards Reynolds; and he made some mistakes in his evidence before the Committee of the House of Commons in his examination respecting the Elgin marbles, which showed him to have had little real taste for Art, though we must give him credit for being a scholar. I will not, therefore, weary you by bringing him before you, but go on to say that I can fully comprehend

the difficulty of artists believing in Alison's theory of association of ideas being the true foundation of Taste. I think myself that he goes too far in this view of the question; that he starts, as do many other writers, with a preconceived idea, not altogether a wrong one, and then labours hard to bring every argument to bear in the direction of that idea. You have with him one view, and only one view, of the question, a good one may be, but not quite comprehending the whole, nor altogether unobjectionable. Association is an affair of sentiment and feeling, very different words from Taste. It may be good Taste for the sculptor to choose a subject that possesses that power within itself, but there the connection appears to end. That association of ideas has a powerful effect, however, in making us love or hate an object whether of Nature or Art, cannot be denied. The serpent is one of the most graceful forms in Nature, represents in itself more than any other the pure line of Beauty, yet we all look upon it with abhorrence. Alison might, indeed, have used the creature as strong evidence in favour of his argument; though he has not done so, he brings, however, quite enough to bear upon it. Wordsworth seems to feel the strength of association in that poem where he describes himself carried on high as in a dream, and wandering among far-off unknown worlds, marvellous to behold, but wanting to him in the charm of association. From these, feeling no pleasure in them, he returns to his mother earth, declaring—

“ Long have I loved what I behold,  
The night that calms, the day that cheers,  
The common growth of mother Earth  
Suffices me—her tears, her mirth,  
Her humblest mirth and tears.”

In the same poem, "Peter Bell," he describes under that name a wild, wandering, savage fellow, who has had a dozen wedded wives, and indicates his want of association with Nature by the much discussed lines :—

"In vain through every changeful year  
Did Nature lead him as before :  
A primrose by a river's brim  
A yellow primrose was to him,  
And it was nothing more."

The idea is not only poetical, but philosophically true. Wordsworth, indeed, has often been described as the philosopher poet, though I doubt much if he does not go a little beyond even poetical truth when he makes the rough, hard Peter repent and become a respectable man. Repent I mean of his sins, not of having married twelve wives. Hannibal is said to have softened the rocky Alps by vinegar, but neither acids nor alkalies ever softened the heart of a hard, unfeeling man in his old age. Shelley, though so dreamy a poet, understood well the word association, he feels its power in his beautiful fragment addressed to the moon :—

"Art thou pale for weariness,  
Of climbing Heaven and gazing on the Earth,  
Wandering companionless,  
Among the stars that have a different birth,  
And ever changing ; like a joyless eye  
That finds no object worth its constancy?"

All these questions I must leave, however, to your decision ; they are difficult ones. I sometimes think that Alison, as well as other writers, has made a mistake between Beauty and Taste, and confounded the two in his arguments ; perhaps I am wrong, but they appear to me different things. Beauty



represents the thing to be admired, Taste the power which we have more or less within us of admiring or appreciating it. I shall I think be more practical, more useful to you, if I go a little further away from this definition, and resume the first description which I ventured to submit to you—namely, that Taste is an attribute of Beauty, appertaining in various ways to her habits, to her movements, to the modulations of her voice, and to the sentiments uttered by that voice—in short, to all her thoughts and actions. I am compelled from my position to descend a step lower yet on the ladder; my business is to confine myself to that Taste which belongs to Sculpture alone. It signifies nothing whether I define Taste as the power that is within us of appreciating the Beautiful; or whether I designate it by its effect, as displayed in the Beautiful; both are of the same growth—the one is the stem, the other the flower, and both spring from the same root. Now I am on the ground. Well, then, to begin I will first say that Taste should be appropriate in its character, suitable to the expression intended by the thing to which it is applied.

For instance, if the expression of the work, say in Sculpture, be grave; the taste, the design, the treatment, the accessories must be expressive of the same feeling; the design must partake of more regularity, and of less variety: the forms must be more geometrical and less irregular; the lines more parallel, more simple, more of the perpendicular, and less of the undulating kind; such lines being conventionally suggestive of quiet, sober ideas, and calm immovability. What is called ornament must be altogether omitted, or used with the greatest caution, ornament being ever more or less suggestive of gaiety, conceit, frivolity. Such ornament as you may please to use should be

to a certain extent in itself suggestive of the same grave idea ; you may call to your recollection many that will answer to this description. The poppy-head helps out, when so used, the idea of sleep or death. The hour-glass suggests time, and the winged globe eternity. If on the other hand the subject be of a joyous character, more flowing, more undulating lines may be introduced, and shadows may be divided to a greater extent ; as flowing lines and multitudes of parts indicate motion and lively impulses : and quick movement is one of the modes of expression to which joy and gladness have resort. In instances where a certain sensuous feeling is implied, as in a Bacchante dance, fuller, more rotund, forms may be admitted than in cases where pleasure of a more refined or intellectual nature is represented, and these in themselves will create more flowing lines. Ornament may be brought in more profusely, because, as I have before said, it is indicative of gaiety, frivolity, and conceit : but here I think caution should be taken not to go too far. It will associate itself with this class of subject better than with any other, but still it is apt to degenerate style under any circumstances, when used without some reserve. It may even sink the work down, if carried to excess, into a lower class. If the figure be primary, and ornament secondary, the work will belong to pure Sculpture ; but where ornament is primary and the figure secondary, it becomes merely decorative Art. The connecting chain between the two, though a long one, may nevertheless be traced from one end to the other.

I have thus indicated what I call the appropriate character of Taste in Art, and this appears to me the chief feature the sculptor has to observe. That it should be of the most retiring, unobtruding kind, contented with the pleasure pro-

duced without displaying the means by which that pleasure is obtained, I have already hinted to you; and in this, and in its never resorting to means out of the limits of Art, consists its other quality, simplicity. Sculpture if good is always simple; it has a single purpose, a simple idea to convey in all it does, and the Taste by which the expression of that idea is accompanied should, indeed must, be equally simple. We have many words to express this quality: fewness of parts—simplicity of line—singleness of effect—breadth of style, &c. Try and call to your mind the works of permanent reputation, you will find them all partake of this quality. It is the want of this fewness of parts that renders many of our Court dresses, the Robes of the Garter for instance, so difficult to treat in Sculpture, where light and shade cannot be resorted to, to conceal or subdue unmeaning portions. The eye wanders among the ribbons, the ties, and the decorations, even when skilful treatment is shown in them, until it forgets altogether the man within them. Two things are here contending for supremacy, the man and the dress: and the man dwindles into insignificance; his head becomes a meaningless block, and his whole figure a mere tailor's dummy, made to carry the robes and for no other purpose. There are I believe no Knights of the Garter in the room, so I may say without fear of offending, that this proves how necessary it is in Sculpture to keep chiefly to simplicity of Taste. Nature has to convey many impressions, many feelings by the same object; and for this reason admits of deviations in the expression of that feeling, which prevents perhaps its being complete in any one case. For instance, the same landscape becomes cheerful and gloomy, gay or sad, according to the atmosphere under which it is viewed, or the

associations that are annexed to it by the movable objects within it. Nature is like a diorama constantly moving before us, ever changing ; sometimes sad and sometimes gay, but Art deals with but one idea at a time, and that idea a permanent one ; everything within it has therefore to work in harmony with the rest to promote that idea ; and nothing must be admitted that does not in some way or other help that idea. There is one thing that unites the two, Nature and Art. Both impress themselves on our mind as beautiful only when one beautiful idea prevails over the whole. In Nature we may excuse inaccuracies of expression, not merely for the reason before given, but because she has more powerful means of Beauty which makes us forget her errors, or if you do not like the term when applied to her, her inaccuracies. In Art we expect everything to assimilate to one purpose ; not only because she is less powerful than Nature, but because her errors of expression and taste are wilful ones.





## LECTURE V.

### STYLE.



WORDS are more or less indefinite in their meaning and admit of wider and more comprehensive translation, according to their context with other words, or their association with ideas previously existing in the minds of their hearers. Among them all there are, perhaps, none more difficult to explain than the word Style. Applicable to many things, totally unconnected with each other, it becomes for that very reason alone in itself misty and indistinct.

With these its many phases we have, however, but little to do. Our business is with Style in Sculpture. I am not certain even within this limited range of so grasping the question and keeping it motionless before you, as to give you the opportunity of taking a clear and correct photograph of its general bearing and effect on the Art I am professing to teach ; but I will place it before you as one that appears to me of a practical character, useful in the carrying on of the work in which you may be engaged. By referring to the meanings appended to the word Style by Walker, we shall find how large is its range, how wide its divergence from any centre that can be marked out for it. While other words have to content

themselves in his dictionary with explanations of scarcely more than one line, it appropriates to itself some seven or eight : and this is to me additional evidence of the difficulty of confining it to one simple idea we can all understand and accept. It is easy to call a spade a spade ; but it is not so easy to explain what constitutes Style, or in what consists its import. Walker puts among other things as its signification "manner of writing," with regard to language, manner of speaking appropriate to particular character, title, appellation. All this may be right, at any rate is enough for him who is not required to go into lengthy definitions, but merely to throw out such suggestions as will, when united with others, be the seed of future comprehension. His task is merely to give the first movement to the train of thought, and then leave it to proceed over the different points to the end of its journey, by its own impetus. Mine, however, is a more responsible one, for though travelling on a loop-line, and on a narrower gauge, Style in Sculpture, I have to accompany, if not guide, you, past the different stations, to the terminus from whence you alight, and go each your own road to your final destination. I think I may be allowed therefore to take a wider range in my definition. Many expressions suggest themselves to me as helping to that object, yet few accomplish it thoroughly. Propriety of treatment is one ; it comes near to Style, but fails for want of strength. What is propriety of treatment in one work of Sculpture becomes exactly the opposite in another ; and so it is with Style : in this respect, in fact, they seem one and the same thing ; but mere propriety scarcely reaches far enough ; we want more steam, something that will carry us beyond that.

Truth is another word that seems akin to it, inasmuch as neither truth nor Style can be exaggerated or carried to excess : but then the same may be said of Beauty, and indeed of every word of abstract meaning. Power of expression comes nearer, enters more into the inner meaning of the word.

I have done wrong perhaps in omitting one of the definitions attached by Walker to Style, the one from which it seems to have been derived, "a pointed iron used anciently in writing on tables of wax," the implement corresponding in short with our pen. Whether the ancient writers derived more Style by the use of this instrument, and by the deep impression they had to make with it on their material, I will not stay to argue with you : but I think we may acknowledge Style to be the instrument of power by which we convey emphasis of expression in our work and render intelligible forms which would otherwise be both meaningless and purposeless. There is another word which artists are in the habit of associating and even of confusing with Style, Manner, which when repeated again and again is designated as Mannerism : a feature by which we are too often enabled to distinguish the productions of one man, and even of one age, from those of another, but there is a wide difference between it and Style. Style advances whatever it is attached to, makes its intention more evident, increases the force of its expression, as well as frees it from impurities which in no way help the object it has in view, while Manner, or Mannerism, on the contrary, serves no good purpose ; is in fact most frequently merely the mirror in which the artist, or may be the period at which he lived, is unconsciously reflected. That Style and Manner are frequently so mingled one with another as to render it difficult to separate them, or

to distinguish which is which, I will confess; but the simple test I have here put to you will, I think, if carefully attended to, though perhaps not serving as an exact definition, show what is Style and what is not, and even tell in what proportion Mannerism, if any, is introduced. This question you will do well to constantly consider, as it tends to elevate what you may send forth, and keeps it free from much that is detrimental to excellence, though at the same time highly seductive to the young mind. I wish to be the more impressive in this advice to you because I cannot help fancying that at this moment there is a more than usual quantity of Mannerism passing for Style in the world of Art, and that sculptors are mistaking one for the other and running after the wrong thing, by affecting peculiarities and imitating weaknesses belonging to past ages, and quite out of place in the present day. I am not saying this in any invidious spirit; on the contrary, I am ready to acknowledge that many fine works are put forth among us, that carry out with powerful emphasis the spirit that is within them; simply because the treatment of every part is in unison with that spirit, and serves to elucidate the meaning intended by the sculptor; but the weed of Mannerism is growing at the same time among us—Mannerism, I fancy, not derived even from the best time of Art: and I feel that it is my duty to protest against it.

There is not much use, however, in my treating the subject after this fashion. Arguing from analogy may, perhaps, instruct you how to prove the soundness of your thoughts, and so far be of service, but is rarely of a practical nature. Let me, therefore, proceed to apply the test I have given, that Style is a quality which tends to further the purpose of a work, and that



Mannerism is not, to examples well known to us, and to which we are accustomed to turn when thinking of the subject before us. I ought, out of respect to antique Art, where, looking at it as I do, I find Style abounding and Mannerism scarcely existing, to allude to it first ; but I prefer, for the sake of being clearly understood, plunging at once into an age where both prevailed together in nearly equal measure.

With the name of Michael Angelo we unconsciously associate the word Style, and almost as invariably the word Manner ; and that he was great, if not the greatest of masters in the former, is as certain, I think, as that he was the abject slave of the latter. I shall endeavour to explain his Style presently, but will begin by saying that Mannerism in him became less detrimental than with other men, from its being the reflection of a stronger character, the self-assertion of a mind with fewer weaknesses and with nobler impulses ; still it was Mannerism, for it appertained to the man, and not properly speaking to the works he sent forth. Those who can look with a cunning eye on what he has left in Sculpture, and even in Painting, will read with as great facility as in a written biography the gloomy, reserved being whose pride amounted to contempt, and often brought him into collision with those about him, but whose mental grasp took in, and almost conquered, the loftiest things that come within the province of human intellect. His statues, indeed his figures in general, rarely look at the spectator : they seem unconscious of his presence, and as belonging to a world of their own, with which he has no communication or right of entry. Buonarrotti condescended to copy no one, not even the antique, the pure yet unassuming truth, there so much a beauty, appeared to him tame and ineffective : the redundant form of

the Farnese Torso was the only specimen on which he bestowed his admiration, and that because he found in it a reflection of the Titan shapes he had conceived in his own brain; the sculptor of that fragment, he seemed to confess, was the Michael Angelo of his day, and the only one worthy of being remembered. His ideal of grandeur and beauty was not that of the old Greeks, the calm consciousness of power in whose gods restrained them from asserting it by over-action or undue display of expression. The conception he took of the beings of a higher world was rather that of the giants of old, creatures more of the earth than of the skies, and yet who rebelled against heaven and claimed it as their own. He was himself a giant of a rebellious spirit, rebelled often and openly against the fickleness of his rulers, for whom he had to labour. If what I have here spoken of, and asserted to be equally evident in the man as in his works, partakes as much of error as of truth, it will prove to you all the more that it is Mannerism and not Style, and how frequently, as I have said before, Manner sets up a pretension to Style.

There is something to be said on the other side. I would not have you think that Michael Angelo would have been better in every way without his Mannerisms; if they do not all tell in favour of his works, they at any rate tell of himself; and without them he would not have been so universally recognized, nor so long and distinctly remembered.

Style is the gold that is the mark of genius, and Mannerism the colour by which you distinguish from whence it comes, but I would have you remember, as your old friend Fuseli is said to have told the students of his day, "there is but one Michael Angelo." His Manner may be one thing, and Henry Weekes's

another, so that any Manner we may adopt may serve, by reflection of ourselves, to lower our Art until it falls below the ordinary range, instead of leaving it, as in Michael Angelo's case, far above the horizon of Art.

We will now take one of the very few finished works left by Michael Angelo, if, indeed, a work can be called finished originally intended to be part only of an immense monument, and one of many other figures of a like size and kind. The Statue of Moses is, however, complete in itself, deficient in no point of conception, and wanting in no touch of the chisel. We shall see, when tried by our test, what there is in it that belongs to Style, and what that appertains to Manner: of the latter there is, in my opinion, less than in any other production by him.

That Michael Angelo has chosen to take the Israelitish type of face in his statue instead of, for the sake of beauty, trying to approach the conventional one of the antique, as other sculptors would have done, belongs to Style, as it helps to portray more strongly the nationality of the great leader, and to associate him more closely with the stirring event with which he was connected—the liberation of his people from the oppression of their masters. It forms, too, a relief from that monotony created by the repetition of the same type of feature, so universally found in old Greek Art. The turning the face away from the spectator belongs also to Style, for it gives the dreamy absence so characteristic of men of thought, especially of those who, as is said of Moses, are weak in power of speech, and accustomed to seek within themselves for their counsel.

Its proud expression may not be quite in consonance with the description given of the great Jewish leader, who is said to have won the appellation of Meek, a doubtful one when applied

to the man who slew the Egyptian in his anger, and afterwards dashed the Tables of the Law to pieces in another fit of rage, when he found his followers deserting the great doctrine he had taught them, and turning back to the foul profanations of their ancient masters.

I am not certain, indeed, to which of the two, Style or Manner, this haughty expression of the face and erect carriage of the head belongs. I may claim it as part of Style, by asking you how could the statue of a great lawgiver, and of one who led a nation out of slavery, through a long line of country where every mile was beset with dangers and difficulties almost insurmountable, be portrayed without it? If we follow the text literally, it is inconsistent with it, and I have given you hints that will convince you, I think, that the source from whence this hauteur sprang was Michael Angelo's own personal character rather than that of the subject he was treating. Looking at it from this point, it belongs partly to Style and partly to Manner; yet how impossible it would have been to introduce an expression of meekness into it. The effect would have been to nullify all that we so admire: the effort, in fact, to introduce such a complicated character into the statue, would have been trying at that which is beyond the reach of Art. Sir Joshua tells you, you will recollect, in his lectures, that all expression or character in Art must be of a simple kind, and that any attempt at a combination of more than one in the same face or figure was beyond its sphere. He was right, and here is an example of the truth of his assertion.

I need not advocate to you as belonging to Style the decision with which Michael Angelo portrayed the anatomy, as all that relates to Style is derived from the most profound knowledge;

nor the grand flow of the beard, helping as it does to emphasize the line, and indicate the position of the statue ; nor again the strong shadow he has thrown, by the means of his drapery, over the more advanced knee, in order to call attention to the action of the leg, so that the eye may catch every portion of the pose, and take in the meaning of what it sees at once. All this you will acknowledge without my assistance, and will appreciate the more the more you study the design and method of the work. I have told you already that there is in my opinion but little of Michael Angelo's usual Mannerism in the figure of Moses, and therefore shall not dwell here on his over-bent wrists and undue marking of veins in his extremities: over-charged as these peculiarities generally are, they do not obtrude themselves so offensively as in many other of his works, because they are in harmony with and serve the purpose of the figure ; we will put them down in this instance to the credit of Style. Not so in his less successful statue of David ; here the hard, marked joints, the rigidly defined tendons and protruding veins of the hands, contradict the impression of youth, obliterate the poetical idea of the simple shepherd boy playing on his harp, with no higher notion of warfare than the use of a sling and a stone picked out of the bubbling stream ; but who hereafter was to soften the anger of Saul by the pathos of his music, become the ruler of Israel as well as the leader of her hosts, and sing in strains of the loftiest poetry the praises of his Maker, and the beauty of His works.

That these peculiarities of Manner in the statue do not appear so marked in the marble as in a cast, one of which you have in the Kensington Museum, you will readily believe. The open air of the Piazza, where it formerly stood,

but whence it has now, I believe, been removed, softens down the anatomical markings, so that they who have never seen the original have to make great allowance for the difference in this respect between the semi-transparent marble and the opaque plaster. All good workmen have to calculate on this difference ; still it cannot be denied that in Michael Angelo's David, the anatomy, though correct in itself, is overdone ; it springs indeed from that over self-assertion that belonged to the sculptor, and which showed itself not only in his artistic efforts, but in every other thought and action of his life. We must in this instance, I fear, put something down to the debit side of Manner in his ledger of fame. That the figure is an awkward one I will confess, but this may have arisen from its having been cut out of a block already commenced upon for another statue, and where in consequence many parts of the marble had already been cut away, though it is scarcely an excuse for the *outré* treatment and exaggerated style in the modelling. The extremities in youth, especially in youths who promise to grow to the full size of manhood, are at all times, I am aware, large and somewhat ungainly ; but in this case Michael Angelo has carried truth to a point which becomes offensive, which destroys the elegance of the statue, and conveys the idea of rude fact instead of abstract truth. It is derived, it should be recollected, not from the study of ancient Greek Art, or preconceived notions of beauty, but from the constant contemplation of the elegant, though perhaps somewhat attenuated forms of the Florentine youth then and now existing. You may fancy that the *dolce far niente*, of which you have heard so much in connection with Italy, enervates their young men : but such is not exactly the case. They are not

heavy feeders, and are in consequence light in their figures ; the muscles, if not large, are clearly marked, more clearly even in their youth than are those of the Saxon : their dark complexion, too, gives those markings an appearance of greater strength than does that of a colder climate. You have had, I know, Italian men as models in your life-school lately, and can but have remarked how distinct their anatomical markings are, notwithstanding what we perhaps are wrong in feeling, a certain want of bulk. The faces of the Italian workman and peasant, especially those of Florence, are refined beyond anything which we can conceive, perhaps because they are descendants of a great though fallen people, and are imbued with a sort of poetical education derived from association with better days.

“Punch” in arguing that trouble was the parent of ugliness, by no means an untenable doctrine, exclaimed, “What horrors we shall become under the income-tax !” May not I therefore argue that noble associations leave behind them remains of what is grand and beautiful ? At any rate, such is the figure we may suppose to have been in the mind of Michael Angelo when he created his David—Italian, not Greek. Its head, if well studied, will be found full of strong character and executed with a firm chisel in a masterly style ; its expression is of a haughty kind—Michael Angelo was haughty. Is not this an illustration of an old-established truth intimately connected with both Style and Manner, and as applicable to Sculpture as to other branches of Art, which is well put in Lord Lytton’s novel of “Kenelm Chillingly,” where he makes him say to an amateur artist, “Nature has no voice except that which man breathes into her out of his mind ; the sketch you are now taking is rather an attempt to make her embody some thought of your own, than to present

her outlines as they appear to any other observer"? You will object perhaps to the head of David as a whole, and with justice, by saying that it is too large, and that its over-size helps that lean *gaucherie* so offensive in the figure. You will with equal justice compare it in your mind with the small head universally used in the antique, and turn your thoughts may be, to that grand example the Theseus, the only one among the larger works of Phidias in this country which has the head still remaining. You will be right in asserting that in all cases the Greeks kept the shape of the skull in their statues clear in the midst of the hair; and that the hair is almost always with them close, so as not to interfere with its general form, or is so relieved by deep cuttings as to give as much as possible the impression of lightness. The Apollo Belvidere, a copy of a Greek statue, shows this principle not only by the way the hair is arranged, so as to exhibit the real size of the skull from almost every view, but also by the elaborate manner in which the locks are relieved.

That the old Greeks were right I need scarcely say; if proof were needed, Michael Angelo's head of David, where the hair stands out in large and heavy masses, so much so as to convey the impression of its being far too large, would give it. Hardly any dexterity of execution can in fact counteract the effect of heaviness in marble under such circumstances; the solidity of the material becomes your master, try what you will, and the old Greeks knew this.

Michael Angelo does not seem to me to have taken this into his consideration: the head of David has, as I have said before, the appearance of being too large, too heavy, and this apparent over-size or over-weight arises chiefly from the too great projection and quantity of the hair; but surely some excuse for this



may be found in the way the heads of the Lazzaroni of his native country are covered. We may call to our mind their wild, uncombed crops ; how they stand out in not unpicturesque, yet generally over-grown masses, and recollect that Michael Angelo was accustomed to contemplate their handsome faces encircled by these rough yet effective frames. At any rate, it shows how even this self-concentrated artist, the greatest of all, whether in Style or Manner, who expressed his own self in his works more than any other artist, looked out from the window of his mind upon that which was about him in order to help and assist the thoughts that were within. Yet I must, I fear, put down the over-charged head to Manner and not to Style, because it is derived from local associations, and not from well-considered principles of Art ; and because moreover it helps in no degree the beauty or expression of the statue. Other thoughts than these suggest themselves connected with the statue of David and with Style. The eye refuses to accept a figure of such colossal height as a true representation of the stripling, who by his slender form and minute size excited the ridicule of the giant with his spear like a weaver's beam, when he came out to battle with him ; and the question naturally arises, If David was as tall as this, what must Goliath have been ? The whole gist of the story is indeed lost by the portraying of the heroic boy on so large a scale. It makes us feel if not the impossibility, at least the imprudence, of attempting to impress the character of youth on a statue of such vast dimensions. I am not aware that it has ever been tried in the antique. In the group of the Laocoon, the sons are diminutive in comparison with the father : I dare not say they are not too diminutive, for they represent almost grown-up lads, and yet would scarcely reach his

shoulders if standing upright by his side. The children in the Niobe group are, it is true, somewhat larger than life, but then the figures of the father and mother, with whom they are placed, form a scale by which they can be measured, and so the eye is satisfied: not so with Michael Angelo's David, we have no scale with him, and are compelled to measure him by himself alone.

I have brought this well-known work to bear upon my arguments on Style, not altogether that you should admire it, for I have hinted to you that in my opinion it is not wholly successful, but that you may be able to give it fair, unprejudiced judgment. Amid all its faults it has many beauties, and still more evidences of the peculiarity of the mind from whence it is derived. I have endeavoured to show you from what source those peculiarities of Style or Manner, whichever you may please to call them, have sprung; and how they have been modified by outward influences. If you read me right you will at least be able to enter more deeply into the thoughts of the Goliath of Art, and into the amount of strength he put forth, and it will prevent you, I trust, from, like David, throwing a stone at him. I might descant much further on the greater works of this great sculptor, the Medici Monuments, and point out to you how the veiling the face under the depth of the helmet adds to the mysterious thoughtfulness of the figure of Lorenzo, and so becomes a part of Style, and how the too great length of neck in that of Julio becomes Mannerism from its assisting in no way either its dignity or effect. I might call your attention to the over-development of muscle in his painting of Christ in his grand work of the Last Judgment in the Sistine Chapel, and again in the Statue of Christ in the Maria sopra Minerva

Church at Rome. Michael Angelo peopled the world of his imagination with giants both mental and physical—he acknowledged acquaintance with nothing less than them—and the ponderosity of form with which he sometimes invested them was the exuberance of an imagination, which, like the helmet in Walpole's romance of the "Castle of Otranto," grew until it became too large for the dwelling which contained it. I might warn you by the example of his successor, Bernini, against an exaggeration in Manner which, if it did not in his case altogether destroy genius, became a vice that tended to lower the Art by leading it away from its right path, the expression of abstract truth.

My object this evening is, however, rather to give you a true idea of the meaning of the word Style, or to speak more modestly, to show you what is my idea of it. With some it implies simply excellence of treatment in contradiction to the absence of that quality, and they read it as a Mannerism always the same, and equally applicable to the carrying out in Art of all subjects: they talk of a Classical Style, and think this is the only adjunct that can properly be attached to it. There are other meanings to the word than this, or rather its meaning is capable of great extension. There is the Severe Style, perhaps pretty much, though not quite, the same thing as the Classical; then there is the Gothic Style, which, clinging to a certain extent to the Classical, has its own peculiar mode of expression. Then again the Simple and the Florid Styles, which, it is not too much to say, are directly opposed to each other; and the Domestic Style, which contradicts and entirely sets at defiance the Classical; and I might even add to them the Grotesque Style, which hardly claims relationship with any of them. I will endeavour

to explain the difference between them, and the requirements of each.

The Classical Style would be the line we should adopt in our work when the subject to be treated belongs to the classical days of old, when it associates itself with the grand old bards whose distant footsteps echo through the corridors of time, or whose conceptions are of that lofty nature that they admit of no minute detail, or dwelling on petty things: our illustration of them should then be in the same Style, severe and simple, not like every-day nature, but like a something which we all of us more or less endeavour to conceive, and even long to be about us; but which can only exist ideally within ourselves, more or less clear, according as we are capable of entering into the feeling of the poet, or of becoming part of it ourselves. Even here some slight variety is admissible; for instance, when treating of a subject from Homer or any other Greek poet, I would advocate a certain amount of imitation of Greek Art in the working out of draperies, and other accessories, and even close adhesion to the type of humanity represented in the Sculpture nearest to the time and belonging to the country of the writers.

The association thus gained will connect your representation closer with them. An illustration in Sculpture from Homer or Hesiod should, I think, be in every way Greek in Style, in Treatment, in Manner, in fact in everything. Your Flaxman will show you this: his designs from the "Iliad," from the "Odyssey," and Æschylus might from their manner be the production of an old Greek sculptor: not so his Dante—there he is less Greek, more Italian, less severe, more fantastical; he deals with things that scarcely come strictly within the province of Sculpture,

gives more licence to his imagination, and resorts to wilder forms, and often to vague indications of ideas hardly capable of being expressed by real modelling, though well enough understood when suggested in mere outline. The error modern imitators of Greek Art generally commit is exaggerating the tendency to straight lines and the repetition of them prevalent in the draped figures of the ancients. Thorwaldsen's admirable works run into this fault. In a design from Milton you are again relieved from the necessity of imitating Greek Art, no longer called upon to use the Classical Style, understanding the word as I do, as meaning imitation of the old Classics of Art ; but you are required to be equally severe and simple in your conception and in your treatment. Your ideal personages must in one sense of the word have nothing of the realities of life : they must know nothing of costume of any sort ; such allusions to it as exist in the poems themselves may be put down as defects, though perhaps unavoidable ones, that bring them nearer to every-day life, and so lower their ideality. You must content yourself in your clothing of them with the difference between light and heavy drapery, according as their character is suited to one or the other, and recognize in no way the immense varieties of texture so admirable in the representation of subjects of a more familiar Style. No angels, at least none with wings, were ever known to buy silks at Swan and Edgar's, or run up bills at Howell and James's.

The Gothic Style, as I have said before, retains some connection with the Classic by preserving its quiet simplicity as well as its grace of line in the general attitude of its figures, and the arrangement of their draperies : that it has much of Mannerism cannot be denied, arising, I think, often from the

mistake of the workers in it, who have fancied that rudeness and exaggeration of form necessarily belonged to it. This peculiarity, however, appertains only to the more decayed periods, and not to the time when it rose into beauty and Fine Art, as in the days of Edward I. That it had then and has now a Style of its own is certain, for it had to express, and does express, the tone and feeling of a religion quite distinct from that of the Greeks ; less earthly or sensuous, more pure and ethereal, more divine. For this reason the human form in it is at all times comparatively suppressed or concealed in folds of drapery which serve but slightly to convey its proportions and movement. The nude is hardly admissible, at least not in the larger examples of the human figure, just as humanity, whether represented by the passions or by the full development of physical strength, is put aside by the religion Gothic Art represents.

I have asserted that the Gothic Style retains, or should retain, the grace of line of the Classic, but I must qualify this by saying that this is subdued by a more rigid feeling. It rarely goes thoroughly into the flowing, for the reason that it has little to do with movement. Life has generally ceased where Gothic Art begins its story, so that her figures either lie in the attitude of death, or stand motionless awaiting the future resurrection into life. They no longer belong to the anxieties of this world, and are, therefore, never shown as engaged in its busy occupations or its ever-recurring troubles. For this reason the upright and the horizontal line ever, more or less, prevail. It avails itself, too, of portraiture of a more literal kind than does the Classic, its object being most often to preserve the true representation or likeness of those who have in life surpassed others in their efforts to gain that Kingdom where they

are now supposed to have gone. The Gothic, too, has no prescribed rules of physical beauty, and, therefore, admits with less reserve character of all kinds, whether it be to carry out expression or to preserve individuality ; and when thus dealing with portraiture it has this advantage over the Classic, it marks more distinctly the different periods of time to which its representations belong, and so lends stronger aid to history. I am speaking, of course, of monumental and religious Art, the only things in my opinion to which the Gothic is appropriate. In a domestic or homely sphere it always appears to me, perhaps from my ignorance, out of place, and unsuited to the purpose. There is generally a meagreness in statues that are intended to adorn a Gothic building, arising from their being chiefly placed in niches almost too narrow to contain them ; and in this there is much that comes under the denomination of Mannerism. Still, even here some pretension to the word Style may be put forth, since it aids a sentiment or purpose ; it shadows forth that self-mortification which characterizes, more or less, all creeds, but more especially the early Christian one, the originator of the Style.

It may not be uninteresting to you if I say, *en passant*, that I believe the recumbent monumental figures in our middle age churches were all carved from effigies, placed upright against boards (by effigies I mean masks or faces, not improbably taken from death, and dressed in the real garments that the individual wore in life), and that from the model thus ingeniously put together, the stone or alabaster was at once wrought. I hold this opinion partly from my knowledge that it was the custom in those ages to carry the body of the deceased dressed in his or her robes or other habiliments, in procession to the

churches, a custom which would have naturally induced their sculptors to adopt this method in their work, and partly from the extremely literal copying in all matters of costume which we find in them. My feeling that these, so to speak, models were placed upright while being carved from is drawn from the fact that they are without that natural *plomb* or fall which would take place in the drapery in the horizontal position, and from my own experience that a model placed upright is more handy than a horizontal one, and so more likely to be chosen by such as the early Christian Church were in the habit of employing—for the most part men the utmost extent of whose capacity did not reach beyond literal copying. You will think that I am speaking disparagingly of Gothic Monumental Art, but such is not exactly the case. Nobody can be more impressed with the solemn grandeur of these records of the past in our splendid cathedrals than I am: they compel in me when in their presence, as I believe they do in every one, that highest of all praise, silence. But then it should be recollected that this awe so imposed upon us does not come from the statue alone; it arises in part from the magnificent structures within which they are placed, and from the religious associations connected with those structures, and again from historical records of a lofty kind belonging to the person commemorated.

Add to this the influence of sacred music, which is often heard in their presence, and you are no artist if you do not feel yourself subdued by a feeling that takes you away from the every-day commonplaces of life into something higher, and belonging to a better world. You will complain that this is mere sentiment—sentimentality: perhaps it may be so, but if you have not this within you you will never be sculptors in the true sense of the



word, and no laying down the laws of the Art either by lectures or otherwise will make you one. Sentiment governed by reason is a most valuable faculty, especially in Art; while sentiment alone is a misleading madness. Remove these sacred monumental figures from their associations, carry them out into the open air, and you will find they have lost half, if not all their charm, for they are most of them poor as works of Art, and do not, when thus alone, contain within themselves that charm which the old Greek Sculpture does, even when transported to a foreign country and seen in the fragmentary state we now behold it in. The Goths were, it is my belief, greater architects than the Greeks, but it would be idle to assert that they were as good sculptors: there is no reason, however, why the finest works should not be combined with the Gothic Style, for they can be made quite compatible with it, and it will be for you who have the benefit of education to produce them.

Even the Florid Style, which, from my dislike to it as somewhat debasing Art, I feel much inclined to stigmatize with the title of Mannerism, is sometimes admissible—in fact, must be acknowledged to be, under some circumstances, the most appropriate: for instance, in the decoration of the theatre, the ball-room, and other places of amusement. Surely when so placed it is more in unison than any other with that elevation of the spirits which is supposed to pervade the scene.

The severe, unaffected, Classical Style would be a damper on our enjoyment under such circumstances, when we are not looking coldly on at real life, but taking, so to speak, a glance at it through the coloured glass of our imagination.

Shakespeare, in his poetical drama of “The Tempest,” seems to give us a view of it in this Florid Style. He elevates, by his

poetical imagination, the scenes he portrays, and so leads us away into a realm of Ideality more florid, more enjoyable than the Reality we are compelled every day to take part in. You must do the same with your Art, or at any rate furnish your portion in that enjoyment, and you will do it best by bending it to the same feeling.

It is under such influences that high and ornamental Sculpture most frequently join hands together, and are present, not as real personages, or as representatives of particular ideas, but as decorations of a scene created for the transient pleasure of the moment. Your lines may now flow with greater freedom, your figures perform their parts with less reserve than on other occasions—your Style may, in short, be Florid. It is here, if anywhere, that colour may be introduced into your statues as well as into the ornaments about them. The danger is of their becoming sensuous; but the refinement, whether of design or execution, which you will introduce will keep that down in the same way as the great Dramatist has done in the fairy tale I have just alluded to. There are scenes and characters in that which connect it with the lower features of humanity, and so preserve a relationship to the Real, which no imaginative work, whether of Art or Literature, should be entirely without; whilst there are others, the creation of a poetic fancy, which serve to lift us upwards into the realms of Ideality, and make us the better for the enjoyment we receive. You will say I am myself soaring into the region of rodomontade, and losing the practical: perhaps I am. I will descend and tell you that you need not feel yourself so strictly bound by rule in this Style as in the others. Your forms are not required to be so true to the modesty of Nature as they are generally; they may be made

more effective by a departure from truth, or at any rate an exaggeration of fact. With those proportions which Nature has given to different objects of her creation you may deal freely, altering them to suit your own purposes of expression or effect. I will put before you Cellini as the highest example in this walk of Art. Strictly speaking, he is an ornamentalist, but he sometimes attempts high Art, where there is often with him a lack of correct proportion—for instance, in his statue of Perseus, where the over-ornamentation hardly hides from a practical eye the want of proper balance of parts. Sometimes, indeed, in his metal works, he uses this freedom as a licence which serves the Style to which his work belongs, and so answers the purpose he has in view: he is rarely, if ever, quite natural, though always Florid in his Style, and always effective.

Of the Grotesque Style I need not say much; it springs out of the last-named by excess, when sculptors of talent get drunk with their Art, just as an extra glass of brandy extracts out of one man wit, while it makes another additionally stupid.

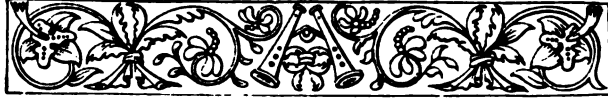
There are those, however, who have been great in it, as in other Styles, as for instance, the man I have just named; but it was in him, I think, the result of an overwhelming conceit acting upon a mind of original genius, but debauched by excesses of another kind.

I will content myself, therefore, with warning you to avoid this feeling,—this Style. If you have Cellini's genius, the abstaining from it will make your Art better; if you have not, I know by experience what the just one drop more will produce.

I will finish my lecture by alluding to what I call the Domestic Style, equally admissible with any other in Sculpture, though only available for subjects coming under the term indicated.

Your appeal must be made here, not to the head, but to the heart. You have to do with the homely feelings, the domestic occupations and enjoyments of every-day life, and your treatment may in consequence be more literal, your tale more clearly and simply told, your dresses in the female figure may be more closely copied, though never without something of that grace of line on which Hogarth so lovingly dwells. They accommodate themselves readily to it—indeed, often possess it without any treatment or alteration in Art, as may be seen by any artist who does not shut his eyes to the beautiful about him. You have in this Style the opportunity of introducing more details, and they may often be made to help the story you wish to indicate. The *sabots* of the French peasant will tell of her hard path through life, and the coarse yet neat material in which she is clothed will speak of her lowly wants and contented mind, while engaged in the most loving and pleasure-giving occupation of a fond mother. In the male figure, however, servile copying of costume is apt to run into the ugly and ungainly: the harsh material of which it is composed, the tasteless shapes into which it is cut, the awkward bearing of the wearer, and the rough usage it is liable to, all render it unfit for representation in Sculpture. Avoid it as well as you can; without the most liberal treatment it is apt to jar rudely against the key-stone of your Art, which should never be lost sight of—Beauty.





## LECTURE VI.

### IDEALISM AND REALISM IN SCULPTURE.



YOU may think it strange that I should commence my lecture by a dissertation on the relative value of Idealism and Realism in the Art of Sculpture. The principles of the profession are so self-evident, its mode of working so simple, that there is little or nothing required from a lecturer, and still less that can be taught by him in words alone. It is this that, in my opinion, renders the lectures of Flaxman, who showed by his works such thorough knowledge of the theory of his Art, so ineffective compared with those works, except in some few parts where he treats on the movements of figures and on the flowings of drapery. The theory of Art is, in fact, even when well understood, difficult to convey in language, and practical instruction can be carried on in the schools only, with the modelling-tool in hand, and the clay to operate upon. The circumstance, too, that the Royal Academy does not think Sculpture worthy of much assistance in that way renders the task of the lecturer at his desk, if not less difficult at any rate less effective.

I therefore take what I have already named as the subject for this evening, convinced that there is nothing so helps the

student in his progress as a thorough understanding of the limits and purposes of his Art, and a due appreciation of its means and capabilities. That a certain amount of both these qualities, Idealism and Realism, is necessary to success in a work of Sculpture, you will readily understand and I will as readily confess ; but I fancy I see, in our more recent exhibitions, a too great tendency towards the latter—Realism : and I feel it my duty, as your lecturer, to warn you of its tendency to lower the quality of your Art, though it may help to the momentary success of those who most lend themselves to it. This is, at any rate, my opinion, and, if so, I am bound, whether right or wrong, to give it to you. There are dangers in success as well as advantages, and I fancy we are experiencing at the present moment both the one and the other, perhaps not only in Sculpture, but in the other branches of Art as well ; and believing this, it is certainly my duty to warn you against the one, as well as to explain to you the other.

You may tell me the public taste is leading you towards Realism—that it is looking for it more than for Idealism ; but that is beside the question. The business of the artist, whatever branch of the profession he may be following, is to lead the public in the way it should go, not to let the whims and fancies of the public lead him out of the proper channels of his calling.

I will confess, indeed I think you will have already discovered, that I am before you as a witness on the side of Idealism, and consequently an unwilling one on the side of Realism.

I am engaged by the Academy, I believe, to advocate the one and not the other—at least there is an understanding to that effect ; and I am sure the Academy is right in laying down this rule for the lecturer. I have never, in fact, heard any artist attempt to

uphold the doctrine of entire Realism for Sculpture, unless it be men who, though possessing the faculty of imitating what they see on their canvas or marble, are totally uneducated, and consequently totally ignorant of the theory of Art; and I will assert this, notwithstanding a tendency that exists at the present moment to Realism in Painting, not altogether detrimental to it. To check in some degree the following of its sister Art in this respect by Sculpture is, in fact, the object of my lecture of the evening.

Before beginning my argument, I should like if possible to remove an impression which seems to me to prevail just now among some not altogether disinterested in their views, that Sculpture, because of its more simple means, is necessarily inferior to the other Arts. That each professor should feel strongly and love ardently the calling to which he belongs is natural, he would hardly go through his duty in right earnest without that partiality for it; but he should recollect that there are difficulties as well as advantages in those to which he does not belong, as well as in those which his taste or feeling has led him to practise.

The simplicity of means of which I have just spoken not only causes difficulties peculiar to the Art of Sculpture, but creates advantages that may be said to be entirely its own. It prevents it, like a Cerberus, from descending to the lower regions of the vulgar and commonplace, and restricts its efforts to the realm of the sublime and beautiful. Depend upon it whenever a work contains no item of either of these two qualities, the sublime or the beautiful, it is a failure, however, as far as imitation is concerned, it may be well modelled, or even well arranged.

Otherwise than this it can only be placed among the repulsive, and consequently useless, or in the same category with lap-dogs, and be called a toy, and so serve no higher purpose than that of pleasing old maids or love-sick girls. Sculpture approaches nearer the sublime from the limited means by which it works, in the same way as does Poetry, which always avails itself of the simplest words when aiming at the highest expression. "God said, Let there be light, and there was light," is the most sublime expression contained in that most sublime of all works, the Bible, because it conveys the greatest, the grandest idea by the most simple language. And so it may be to a certain extent with your Art. The more simple the means you resort to, the more broadly you deal with the abstract ; the more you leave it undisturbed by minute detail, the more sublime will be the result. The absence of profuse means is the friend that will help you to success, and teach you to walk in the narrow path that leadeth to the right end. As I have before said, I am here more particularly to testify to the cause of Idealism. I will endeavour, however, to be myself the Serjeant Buzfuz, and undertake, by virtue of my brief, my own cross-examination ; and so I trust you will arrive at the right verdict. I have already, indeed, been compelled to admit the necessity of a certain amount of Realism, in order to give substance to the work ; but I shall hardly succeed in twisting out of myself, even when I put on my wig, that in principle truth is fact or fact truth. You may admire the character of your friend Mr. Gradgrind, in Dickens's "Hard Times," but it will be hard times for your Art when you come to unite in it these two words, fact and truth, under one and the same meaning.

I will now endeavour to give a definition of the two words



Idealism and Realism, as taken separately from each other, and as applied to our Art. Idealizing, as I understand it, is the abstracting from Nature that which enables the sculptor to represent her meaning and intention in her various departments, whatever they may be, not those mere accidents or peculiarities that exist in each individual example, in many, if not all instances, weak or defective. These defects Idealism omits or supplies the place of, according to circumstances.

Taking the word in a wider sense, Idealism seems to imply a greater power still—that of creating something that is altogether independent of Nature ; but in this sense there is no such thing as Ideality, or power of idealizing, either in Art or in any other mode of expression. We create nothing, we merely recombine in different modes that which is put before us by a greater power. The true idealist does not turn his back on Nature, or fancy that he can carry out his thoughts without her ; on the contrary, he looks upon her as upon his mistress, sees nothing in her but beauties, and is blind to all but her charms. In this respect Idealism and Realism are, after all, not so opposed to each other as they at first seem to be ; for they are both derived from truth, though in one sense it is theoretical truth, in the other simply the truth, or rather, I should say, the fact of the moment. The difference consists mostly in the manner in which Nature is looked upon by the artist—whether with the loving eye of a fond child, or with the sulky scowl of an indifferent cub.

I have in former lectures endeavoured to persuade you, perhaps not altogether successfully, that utility is beauty and beauty utility. I may say that I continue still to hold the same opinion, and that I have since been pleased by observing that Mr. Gladstone, who, from the universality of his mind, may be

said to be an authority in Art as well as in other things, advocated very nearly, if not exactly, the same opinion in his address at Greenwich. This utility, or beauty, is the Idealism I am endeavouring to explain to you, and for which I would wish you to strive. The abstract of Nature is, in fact, the essence of the abstract Art, Sculpture.

Idealism is not, as has been sometimes absurdly imagined, the centralizing of all forms into one in Art, but a full and unalloyed display of each in its own department.

Thus the Idealism of the Apollo Belvidere, of the Farnese Hercules, and of the Fighting Hero, is each quite different of its kind—the representative of a different phase in Nature, having a different purpose in view and different intentions to carry out. In every one of them the Ideal is attained by different roads. In the first the muscular display is softened down in order to bring forward the spiritual character, while in the second it is given in a strong and even exaggerated manner, which at once lowers him to the grade of a demi-god; while again, in the third, natural strength is portrayed, and thus he becomes human only, though of the most perfect kind. That there should be more of the Ideal and less of the Real in one than the other, will be obvious to you; and it may be a lesson to you as to what proportion of one and the other you are called upon to make use of in the different instances of your work.

You will tell me that the peculiarity of these figures consists in Character, not Idealism, and in a different mixing of that quality with Idealism. That is true to a certain extent, for Character is a term whose meaning in Art runs very closely on Realism, so closely that, though they are by no means the same, it is sometimes difficult to separate them. The one is the re-

presentation of what belongs to a particular class, distinguishing that class from all others; the other is the representation of a fact that may belong at any moment to any individual or class and yet be the property of none: but do you not, when endeavouring to personify such beauty as these examples represent, take an Ideal of each as a centre for your model? It is because of the absence of individual character that the figure of Adam is so difficult to personify, or rather, because of the wide field in Nature he is called upon to represent. In Michael Angelo's fresco of "The Creation of Man" in the Sistine Chapel, one of the grandest works of Art in existence, wonderful as is the drawing, the figure is, after all, no more Adam than Hercules, and becomes, from the unavoidable absence of this individuality, the Ideal of physical man. Without doubt Michael Angelo intended it simply as an illustration of the passage "God created man in His own image," and took the name Adam in its real meaning—the first man. All artists, and sculptors in particular, should study this work, and more especially the figure itself, commonly called Adam; there is in it a knowledge of form of which the English school of Art is singularly deficient.

I need not give you examples of Idealism in Sculpture, the whole antique of Greek Art will serve that purpose. Its thorough Idealism, its complete abstraction of the beautiful from Nature, is the one feature that has given it its superiority over every other age or country. In the best days of Phidias, and even of his scholars, there was but one aim: Nature was looked upon only with one view, that of understanding and representing her meaning and her efforts at attaining perfection in her various grades, whether of animate or inanimate life. Each sculptor

may have taken his favourite walk : Phidias may have chosen the more noble, Praxiteles the more beautiful ; but each one strove to carry out for himself a something more noble and more beautiful than anything he could find, or hope to find, about him. And it is because their aim was based on this broad principle, and not obstructed by the whims and vagaries of fashion, that it succeeded in producing, and in handing down, a standard of Ideal Beauty which, though not followed at the present moment, is now accepted as such in the same degree as it was in the days when it was discovered. We have heard much of the beauty of the ancient Greek race, and of the manners and customs of that people which tended to develop that beauty among them ; but it would be absurd to suppose that they found perfect examples, and that their Art was merely imitative.

The god-like grandeur of their Jupiter, the archangelic elegance of their Apollo, the severe and dignified beauty of their Minerva, were conceptions of the Ideal, derived from a poetical mind fully imbued with the beauty of what is around it, and thoroughly understanding the principles on which that beauty is constructed. Antique Roman Art had still for a time its Ideal in Sculpture, but it was less than that of the Greeks, though in point of execution its works are often equal to them. The fellow-countrymen of Socrates and Plato, who worked out for themselves the Ideal of moral philosophy, had already worked out that of Sculpture, and were superior to the Romans because a more refined, a more imaginative and deep-thinking people, though perhaps hardly so robust.

In the time of Constantine this Idealism had sunk with the latter people before its antagonist, Realism ; and so Sculpture

fell into the matter-of-fact and commonplace, though it had still kept up its rank in the days of Augustus, depending, however, more on elaborate ornamentation and exquisite workmanship than on Ideal purity of form.

In the mediæval ages, when Sculpture rose again after a lapse of years from that long death which had overtaken it owing to the total change in that Ideal which had been its support in its pagan days, it again attained a standing by once more adopting an Ideal of its own. Sculpture was even then still aiming at an Idealism, though of a more religious and spiritual kind, and for that reason less adapted to its means. In the earlier or pagan times physical beauty was the representative of mental excellence, whereas in the later Christian ones the absence of beauty was considered almost essential to the presence of moral or religious excellence; at any rate an Ideal of bodily weakness was taken as a standard, and this, apart from association, is apt to connect itself with anything but perfection.

Michael Angelo, the great man of his time—the representative, in fact, of Sculpture in the middle ages—adopted an Idealism of his own rather philosophical than religious; and it is this that has made his reputation, as well as created that distinctive character we so reverence in his works. I have said it was an Idealism of his own, not so pure, nor to my mind as lofty as that of the antique, for there is an earthly quality in it that lowers it in comparison with the godlike conceptions of the Greeks. His beings are giants in dimensions, and often giants in mental capacity; but still they are inhabitants of this material world, not entirely creations of that Ideal one we all endeavour to conceive and bring before us. I do not say this to his detriment—on the contrary, it is to his credit, as showing

the original grasp of his imaginative mind, and his ability to create for himself an Ideal totally distinct from that of the antique, and representing Nature in a new phase, of which we had, even with the aid of that antique, perhaps little or no conception. If the beings he put forth by his Art do not belong to the seventh heaven, they are at least inhabitants of a region higher than our own—creatures that unite in themselves something of a godlike nature, and yet retain a something of our humanity that leads us upwards on our road to that heaven of Art, the Ideal. There is, in truth, just enough of Realism in them to connect them with our own race, while their Idealism leads us to place them on high as belonging to the nobility of Art. That this his Ideal was influenced, perhaps lowered in a degree, by his love of display in anatomy, in which he was so learned, I can hardly deny ; though whether it most helped the Idealism or the Realism of his productions it would be difficult to decide : there is much of both in all he did, and it enabled the two to meet in them on higher ground. The outline-drawing called his canon of proportions betrays something of caricature, or of what may be termed *bravura* character : it might almost be quoted as an example, not of the proverb that a little knowledge is a dangerous thing, but of a too great knowledge being dangerous. That, however, would be an absurd view of the question ; it shows, indeed, how he revelled in his mastery of Art, how he played with it in his work, as a spoilt child does with his toy, until he almost destroys it in his exuberance of spirits. If you care to obtain a photograph of this drawing, you will find in it, in spite of a certain boastful style, every part in its right proportion, and portrayed with a power that could only be derived from the most profound knowledge, accompanied

by the most complete command of hand. It appears to say to the beings he created on the Medici Monuments and elsewhere, "See how thoroughly I understand you, and, strong as you are, how thoroughly I am in every respect your master."

There is no necessity, however, for cautioning the student against the idea that a too great knowledge of anatomy or of any other part of his profession is likely to lead him astray : it did not do so with Michael Angelo, and I will be responsible that it will not with the student ; on the contrary, it was one of the means by which the great artist of the middle ages was enabled to display outwardly that inward Ideal with which he was so strongly imbued, without which means his productions would have been wild and purposeless exaggerations, causing in the spectator the smile of contempt instead of the silence of profound respect.

I think, however, I may leave the student in full confidence that he will imitate neither the Idealism nor the style of Michael Angelo, though there are some who have, to their own detriment, attempted a forgery of it ; but I have found it generally one of the first symptoms of their decay in Art. The original owner of the work has invariably been proved to their cost, as in the fable of the Bees and Wasps, by the work itself ; and the forger has been condemned, like forgers of another kind, to tread, for a certain time at least, in the footsteps of those who are continually striving to get upwards, yet never rise a degree higher.

It is to the antique that I must refer the student in search of examples of the Ideal ; but he must not look at it after the manner of the antiquary, who, with his eyes placed in the back of his head, always fancies he is advancing while he is really

going back. Viewed in this way, the antique has for many years sat on modern Art, like the old man on the back of Sindbad the Sailor, weighing down all its efforts at doing good, and perverting it from the right road. The student may take the fine forms and adopt the simplicity of treatment shown in it; he may learn from it the principles of beauty laid down in it; but he must make his Art express the manners and feelings of the present day, and connect itself with the associations on which our age loves to dwell, and expects it to appeal. By attending to these hints, he will cause Sculpture to serve the purpose for which it was intended, and, I believe, create a new Ideal that shall be recognized equally with the old one, if it be not quite of the same lofty kind. There are other dangers than these from too servile an adhesion to the antique: the student, from a too close following of the classical, may become pedantic in his style, may annihilate within himself that original mode of expression which I would advise him to keep safe and sound in all he does, and may lose all those associations which connect him with those for whom he has to work. He has not only to answer to what is required of him by the public, but to bring forward something peculiarly belonging to himself, by which he may teach that public new modes of thinking and new views of his Art.

This is quite distinct from following the whims and fancies that may prevail at the moment. In the latter case the Art becomes the servant of the public taste, following the errors of the period, and even helping it downward in its evil course. Without laying too much stress on the notion that Art is, or should be, an instructor, I would say decidedly that this running after the public is not the purpose for which it should



be used. The pedantry to which I have alluded arises from the sculptor taking ancient Art instead of Nature as his primary source, and his so becoming a mere manufacturer of modern antiques that pretend to be old without bearing the real stamp of age upon them, and so are valued neither by the antiquary nor by those whose feelings and associations go with more modern days.

Could we even rival the productions of Art of ancient ages by these means we should be doing no good. We should be worshipping at a wrong shrine : the Ideal of the Greeks is gone.

One of the reasons, indeed, I believe, that Sculpture fails to soar in modern times to such a height in Idealism is, not the want of ability in the sculptors, but that either the Ideal itself is completely changed, or has assumed a phase of a less poetic type than of old, or that the world does not look so much to the Arts for expressing it. The Ideal that is now expected is of a more indefinite nature, and for that reason less adapted to the Art of Sculpture. Science has taken the place of the Arts, and created for the thinking man an Ideal of its own, not less sublime or inspiring, but of a totally different kind—has divided, like a prism, the light of modern days into many colours, and Art is but one among the many. Still it is the business of the sculptor to take that one as it is, and display it in the clearest and brightest manner, not waste his days in regretting the time when it was almost in itself the representation of that white light, the concentration of all others.

We have the Dutch school of Painting, in which close imitation or Realism is shown, and again, the Italian, in which Idealism is acknowledged as the proper and prevailing feature. Both are appreciated ; but I will say, without fear of contra-

diction, that the latter stands, in the estimation of all who comprehend the real purposes of Art, on the highest platform. In the former, Realism is carried to its fullest extent, though in addition to this, it must be confessed that it contains a painted history and faithful representation of the manners and customs of the people to whom it belongs. This, indeed, to my mind, is the true charm of the Dutch school, though I can hardly say that the Realism which they endeavoured to introduce into their Sculpture, as every one must have observed who has visited the Low Countries, was as successful.

The latter school, the Italian, rejects to a certain extent Realism, or only takes that much of it as helps it to its purpose of lifting the thoughts to the holy and religious, or, in other words, to the Ideal of the sublime and beautiful. It has an Idealism of its own, whose companion Realism is only so far as it draws with it the sympathies of the spectator, and makes him feel that the lesson intended is applicable to himself. The heads and figures of the Disciples in the picture of "The Transfiguration" are as much conceptions of the Ideal as that of the Saviour Himself, but having just as much of the real in them as shall connect them with every-day humanity, and at the same time retain for them their proper place and relative value in the work.

The Maniac Boy, too, on whom the chief interest is centred, is not a portrait of individual suffering, but a conception or Ideal that warns us of our infirmities, and excites our fellow-sympathy with trouble. This, the Italian school, is the one which revived the Art of Sculpture in the middle ages, and in that Art it adhered even more closely to Idealism, and rejected even more fully Realism than it did in Painting. It was, in fact, by a

strict adhesion to the practice of Idealizing that it attained that greatness which is now recognized as its attribute.

I am again running back to the advocacy of what I am myself most fond ; but in doing so I will endeavour to be more practical than I have hitherto been this evening, by reminding you that Sculpture has not within itself the means for Realism that Painting has. It possesses no power in colour, for even if you profess to justify the use of it in the Art, it can be but in a very limited manner, and must be applied at all times to one and the same surface. You will say that the case is similar in this respect with painters and their canvas, but with them the power exists of representing atmospheric effects, distance of objects one from another, and even variety of material, to a far greater extent than in Sculpture.

The latter Art has little or nothing of linear, and still less of aerial perspective at its command ; nor can it so arrange its lights and shades as to produce one permanent effect, for they are changing every hour of the day, even when the work itself is immovable : whereas, with the painters, all this is contained within the thing itself, is much the same at all times, and is so arranged by the artist as to act in combination for the expressing of the one idea he wishes to portray. The purpose to which all these means—light and shade, colour, linear and aerial perspective—mostly tend is Realism, for they serve to deceive the eye, or at any rate to carry out such a degree of deception as shall leave the mind free to contemplate the real motive of the work. That they may be made to serve Idealism in a secondary way must be acknowledged, in the same way that it must be always confessed that they often, when carried too far, become the means of impeding it.

The use of colour in Dutch Sculpture, to which I have already alluded, combined with impurity of form, helps to lower their work by imparting to it a too familiar character ; and the use of perspective, from the circumstance that it must ever be false except when viewed from one particular point, serves to take it out of the province of the Art.

To what, then, must the student resort in the want of these means, or in the limited use of them ? To Idealism, the essence of his Art, to which all the powers of imitation he may gain in the schools should be subservient—to the abstract of Nature, which he will best understand by a search into her inner structure, and a contemplation of her many examples, defective though they be when viewed one by one separately. I think I hear you say, You have told us nothing as yet of Realism in Sculpture, though you acknowledged it to be to a certain extent of service in the Art. I will now say something.

Realism may serve, by contrast, to heighten the Ideal, though it should not form the essence of your work. It is, when joined with that Ideal, a scale by which you may measure and decide upon the amount of Idealism called for in what you are doing. It will help your imagination to rebound from the earth like a ball, and so rise to a greater height in that Ideal than it would by its own natural force ; or it will, when mixed with that Ideal, be the means of modifying parts so as to lead you up gradually to the apex of Idealism to which your statue or group strives to climb. I have already mentioned the picture of "The Transfiguration" as an example of this. The figures of the Apostles may be said to partake partly of Realism, or to consist of a modified Idealism that assists us upwards to the truly Ideal representation of the Saviour, which thus becomes more com-

prehensible by the eye being naturally led up by steps to it, and its having the contrast of a lesser Idealism surrounding it. This, you will recollect, is Raphael's work, whom we all know ; but I cannot say if you will recollect the productions of a late member of the Academy, Westall, who, from the want of this modification of the Ideal in his works, imbued them with a vapid and inane feeling that rendered them uninteresting, and at the same time false to Nature. He had a strong notion within himself of the Ideal, but did not perceive the necessity of modifying it by Character or Realism, so as to connect them with the truth of Nature. This is quite distinct from that peculiarity found in the works of a far greater contemporary artist, Stothard. With him there was an equal conception of the Ideal, but it was tinged, I may say tainted, not so much by Realism as by a certain Mannerism that led him away equally from truth—nullified, in fact, to a certain extent that variety which should, under any circumstances, exist.

In both it was Mannerism, but Mannerism arising from different sources. In one case it arose from a notion that nothing was admissible in Art but a certain type of Ideal beauty he had conceived within himself; in the other, by an unconscious manner that grew out of himself and increased as age came on, until at last, without obliterating many beauties in his compositions, it rendered all his figures, to a certain extent, alike. I am not comparing the two, for in the essentials of Art there was no comparison to be made. Stothard was one of the greatest composers England has produced, but I cannot say exactly the same of Westall ; though I may excuse him by reminding you that he was not the only one of his time who ran into the error of imagining that Idealism consisted in centraliz-

ing all human forms into one. My wish in calling up these departed spirits of the Academy is, that they should give their testimony to the truth of what I am endeavouring to impress upon you, viz., that the Ideal is the gathering together of all the qualities that constitute the essence in Nature of particular characters or divisions, and the throwing aside all that does not belong to them. The examples I have chosen are taken from a different branch of Art from mine, but they are equally applicable to it. Idealism should be accompanied and supported by Realism in Sculpture as in Painting, the only difference being that in the former Idealism should prevail in a greater degree, as its more essential quality. I come sometimes, when dreaming of my Art, to the opinion that it is the same in this respect in Literature, and in case the gentleman engaged on the side of Realism should tell me that dreaming cannot be taken as evidence in court, I will add that I am of the same opinion now, when I am as wide awake as at most times. Take for example "The Tempest," by Shakespeare, one of the most imaginative and truest artists that ever lived—true because he understood so thoroughly the internal anatomy of human nature, and imaginative because he made that knowledge the means of soaring high into the Ideal, without striving to attain that still greater height where no human thought can breathe or live. Where would be the Ideal beings he created in his drama without their earthly contrast? Should we be able to feel and believe in the tricky Ariel, who lies under the cowslip's bell and rides on the curl'd clouds, yet is brought in connection with us by having, for a time, to undergo the troubles of humanity? Should we thoroughly feel and understand his Idealism unaccompanied by the contrast of the drunken butler

Stephano, who supplies wine to the imagination, and his jesting companion Trinculo, who adds his sparkle to the beverage, or again, by the monster Caliban, who, buried in the filthy earth of his evil passions, is in himself a true Ideal, though founded on the Realism of human nature? he lies grovelling below, but is the foundation upon which is erected all that beautiful structure of the Ideal which rises above him. The great magician who regulates the whole knew that, without these accompaniments and contrasts, the human mind could scarcely soar with him into those glorious visions he displays at the marriage of Ferdinand and Miranda—the union of the pure with the beautiful. You may take, again, if you like, the “*Midsummer-Night’s Dream*.” Should we enter as thoroughly into the spirit of the mischievous Puck, or see him in our imagination sitting on his mushroom and planning his wicked tricks with the same gusto and enjoyment in the absence of the vulgar being who is taken for a while out of himself, and so becomes the creator of an Ideal, foreign, perhaps, to his everyday nature, but not the less beautiful for the poet to contemplate? The Ideal, again, in this instance, is raised still higher from its emanating out of the low and commonplace, in the same way as the conceited clown gains interest with us from his connection with creations of an Ideal kind. Without that association he would be but a real donkey, and might have been sold at Smithfield, instead of having for a while an ass’s head placed on his shoulders that lifts him out of himself into a pleasure not properly his own. You may find, too, in the play of “*Pyramus and Thisbe*,” introduced into the piece, a sly satire on that over-classical style which is apt to become a too-prevailing feature in Sculpture—that is, if you like to look at it in

that light. All this is arranged by the mind of the master, not the work of chance or accident ; and the sculptor may apply the lesson to his Art, and, in my opinion, be a gainer by it.

I have thus endeavoured to string together a few arguments for your consideration on the relative value in Sculpture of Idealism and Realism—not, perhaps, in the best possible manner, but certainly in a sincere and truthful feeling, according to the light that is in me. They are such as have struck me in the course of many hours of quiet consideration—the best I have been able to give. You may find them of some value or of none. I do not mind, indeed, confessing to you an inward suspicion that the question may have been looked upon more in the light of an earnest advocate than in that of an impartial judge ; for it is very difficult for me—indeed, for any one, to free himself from foregone prejudices. Of this you have to judge yourselves ; you have to give your verdict for or against the argument, or you may imitate the canny Scot, and deliver your verdict as “not proven.” But if my lecture serves only to create discussion within yourselves, you will be the gainer, whether I have been right or wrong in what I have said. You may, if you please—indeed, I should like you to—take me argumentatively by the collar, and give me a good shake ; and though you will, by so doing, shake nothing much out of an obstinate old fellow like me, you will gain strength within yourselves by the exertion used for the purpose, and so my object will have been gained.

All I ask of you is, that if you succeed in overthrowing me, it shall be, not by trickery or unfair blows, but according to the rules of fair play in the ring. One word more as postscript ; it may, perhaps, like the lady's, contain the chief purport of the letter. Do not imagine me ignorant of the difference between



Character and Realism. They are, I know, quite distinct, though nearer allied one to another than to Idealism, and I have, for this reason, ranged them on the same side in the battle, and may be, in some instances, confused them; but you are at liberty to use which you please, the result in either case will be the same.







STATUETTE OF CLEOPATRA

*H. Weekes, R.S.A.*



## LECTURE VII.

### COLOUR IN SCULPTURE.



WE have just passed through a period when Colour was attempted to be introduced into modern Sculpture, and seemed for a time not unlikely to re-establish itself in the Art. I am not certain, in fact, that the experiment has even yet entirely lost its hold, though it can scarcely be said to have made much advance. Perhaps, for this reason, the present day—when the first *furor* has gone by, and quieter deliberation on the advantages or disadvantages that may arise from its introduction is supposed to be going on—is the proper one for considering the question, as we are less likely to exhibit violent enthusiasm for or bigoted antagonism to it. It may be of advantage, too, to the student to have his mind always thinking, even though he be unable to come to any conclusion, on the subject : I propose therefore to take it in hand this evening.

You must allow me to commence by bringing before you, first of all, the name of that truly eminent sculptor Gibson, who was, as you know, the chief, if not the only apostle of the doctrine, and to analyze his character as an artist ; not with the view of entirely upsetting what he thought or felt, but with the object of allotting to it its due value and proper influence.

I trust I shall do so in a liberal and modest spirit, giving Gibson credit for all he deserves, and acknowledging the excellence of his refined and truly classical works, as well as the delicate taste with which he tried the supposed improvements of Colour upon them. That their talent was immense will never be denied, though the presence of genius within them may be a matter of opinion. That I am not altogether inclined to assign to him the last comprehensive word is owing, I believe, partly to the character of the man, and partly to the school of Art in which he was educated. He believed, perhaps was taught to believe, that the old Greeks had attained the *ne plus ultra* of Sculpture, and that nothing remained for the modern nations but to follow them in every respect. The doctrine he put forth was, that there was no other road in the Art, and that every attempt at deviation was so much falling-off in excellence—so much straying from the right path. I cannot go so far as that with him, as it would be destructive of all original thought, of all novelty, and of all chance of establishing a national school of Sculpture. Perhaps it had this effect with Gibson himself, for his productions show little, if any, original conception, stand out in no way as a school in themselves, offer no new suggestion to the student; and it is for this reason that I have ventured to deny, or at any rate to doubt, his right to the possession of genius. Leaving out, however, this point, there seemed some advantage to a mind constructed as his was in what he inculcated—namely, subservient adhesion to blind adoration of antique Art. It left him free to study those abstract forms of beauty which are the distinguishing features of the old school, and I think I may say enabled him to approach nearer to them than perhaps any other sculptor of modern days. His works

are of a purer kind than even those of the *atelier* in which he was bred ; they possess all the finish of Canova with far less of the affectation and other vices of that great man ; nor were they so unpleasantly rigid as are sometimes those of Thorwaldsen : in short, they were more purely Greek.

I know, indeed, of no recent sculptor from whom the student can better learn correctness of form or even dignity of style. In this sense they might become a school of Sculpture in themselves, but then the lesson they teach has been taught before, and we may as well go to the original market for our food as to him who buys it from the same source, and merely retails it to us second-hand. He could hardly be offended at my saying this were he alive, for he openly advocated it, confessed that he derived all he possessed from the antique, and that there was nothing else worth seeking after or obtaining. It was upon this principle that he took up, late in life, the colouring of his statues. I will not be so ill-natured as to say that it might be the dotage of old age, encouraged, perhaps, by the flattery of surrounding satellites. I do not think it was, for it was characteristic of the enthusiasm with which he pursued his profession through life, and consistent with the doctrine which he held to be infallible. He had found it among the Greeks, and therefore it was right: precedent with him was everything. But then, if we allow this, we may as well throw him aside out of the field altogether; for had he never found Colour among the ancients he would never have attempted it in his own works, and the number of infatuated followers does not prove the truth of a religion in Art any more than in higher matters. We can go back to the ancients ourselves, look to the evidence of the same writers which he examined, and judge the question as if no one had attempted

a revival of it in our own day. I need scarcely waste your time by reminding you that in the Sculpture of all early nations Colour was used—with the Assyrians undoubtedly, and with the Egyptians also, as existing works amply testify. It was but natural that Colour should be attempted; the thought of intentionally omitting it would, in fact, never occur to a primitive people, nor would a colourless statue satisfy the requirements of a mind uninstructed in the true principles of the Art and ignorant of its proper limits.

The doing away with Colour may require more complicated arguments to justify it; these, however, we shall, I trust, come to at a later portion of my lecture. That the Greeks resorted to Colour in the best period of their Sculpture is beyond all reasonable doubt. Contemporary authors, Plato and Pliny for instance, make direct allusions to it, give us distinct descriptions of the ivory and otherwise coloured statues of Jupiter and Minerva by Phidias—colossal works, whose tints must have approached pretty closely to those of Nature, and have been obtained chiefly, if not wholly, by the use of coloured materials.

Ivory is repeatedly mentioned as serving for the hue of the flesh, and gold is recorded as having been used for various ornaments on the different coloured garments in which they were invested. There could have been none of that faint kind of tinting, that mere indicating of Colour attempted in modern imitations: the Colours were boldly, fearlessly portrayed. Every means of approaching the appearance of Nature herself was used: glass and even jewels were brought in to represent the eyes, and no means neglected to carry out the impression of reality, or in other words, to deceive the senses, as far as they could be deceived by representations so much beyond the real

size of ordinary humanity. You will say that this is contrary to the doctrine I have laid down to you as having been practised in the best days of old Greek Art; and so it is, standing by itself: but there was a reason for it. Their colossal coloured statues stood or sat in the midst of the temples—were the presiding deities of the worship carried on within them. There was the crowd of ignorant devotees to be impressed with wonder, to be made to conceive a real presence, and to feel awe at its power; and to carry out this, it was necessary that every means should be used, that no aid should be omitted. The deity with the Greeks—indeed, with all the old pagan nations—though assuming many shapes, was in no one of them an abstract essence, but always a real personification, built upon the highest conception of humanity, because imagination can portray nothing greater; but still a veritable substance, with far greater power than themselves, but with many of the failings of their own natures. Their gods had not even the omnipresence which we attribute to that abstract essence in which we believe, and it was necessary, in consequence, that the being to be worshipped should be positively present, or at any rate, should convey an impression of being so on the followers of the creed. The colossal statues were not a part of the temple; they were there, and the temples were built for them to dwell and to receive honour in from the faithful. The god or goddess formed no part of the architecture of the temple; they were the owners of it just in the same way as a man may be the owner of his house. They were, in truth, so large as to be out of all proportion with it. It does not follow, therefore, that, because we have records of Colours being used in these statues, it should necessarily have been resorted to in those that formed



the architectural decorations of the temple. It is true that in all more ancient Art, Architecture as well as Sculpture, both Colour and Form are employed for decoration; but I am inclined to think that with the Greeks it was used in a most reserved manner, and with almost fastidious taste. That the lines of their pediments and other parts of their temples may have been strengthened as well as beautified by Colour, and that the background of the Sculpture within them may have been tinted for the sake of relief, it would be difficult to deny; but that the Sculpture itself was ever coloured at the time of its execution, I am inclined to disbelieve. There is too much seeking after effect by means of deep cuttings and powerful shadows for that; too much polishing of the surface, as we see by the parts still preserved, to admit of Colour adhering to it.

It is doubtful if we find any Colour now upon the Greek remains that have come down to us, while it still exists in great brilliancy, and in a most perfect state, on far older productions, such as the Egyptian. But we gain little or nothing in our argument by that, as we have to recollect that a far greater amount of decay has taken place in the Parian marble than in the harder granites and syenites of the latter people. In one instance the polished surface is hardly touched by time, in the other, a tangible thickness has, in most cases, been removed: so that the discovery, or non-discovery, of Colour at the present moment in old Greek Art argues with me neither one way nor the other. There is, however, one circumstance that seems to tell, though only at first sight, in favour of the presence of Colour in the frieze of the Parthenon, one of the most beautiful examples of the best period of Greek Sculpture. The bridles of the horses, evidently, from the holes by which they were fastened, once

existing, not only in the frieze, but in the horses of the pediments as well, and without doubt composed of metal, would appear far more incongruous against the white marble than they would against the coloured; and I cannot think the architects and sculptors would have tolerated an error of this egregious kind in a building where so much exquisite taste was displayed. But then another question arises: if the figures of the frieze were coloured, what induced them to make the bridles separate? It would have been very easy, in fact far easier to have cut them out of the solid material than to have added them afterwards in a work with so little relief in it as this, and Colour would have made them distinct enough for all purposes; they would, in fact, be in complete harmony with the other parts. The only reasoning I can draw from these trappings being metal and separate is, that the reliefs were not coloured—at least, not the figures of it—and that the artists omitted the bridles in the first instance, knowing how such things interfered with that simple beauty of line, that elegance of action, they sought for with such true devotion, and which is so conspicuous in the before-mentioned work. These bridles, I am inclined to think, were introduced by command of some after-lover of a more imitative, matter-of-fact style of Art. Hadrian is accused of having caused the colouring of the figures of the pediment; may he not have been the introducer of the bridles in the frieze? I cannot accept the theory sometimes put forth that they were made separate from the rest of the work expressly that they might fall off, for no true sculptor would do that except under compulsion, and if compelled in the first instance to introduce the bridles, he would also have been compelled to execute them out of the solid substance.

All these remarks may be reckoned only as so many speculations on a question that will never be decided : I give you them as mine, with the best reasoning applied to them in my power. Other men, with more authority than I can boast of, assert that the bridles were attached to the horses' mouths when the work was first executed, that they were made of gold, and separate, in order that they might be removed in time of war ; but I cannot help fancying that men of this way of thinking, and who are not artists, scarcely appreciate the loss of harmony to the whole that must occur. Naturally, as a sculptor, I give credit for what I consider the best taste and the soundest judgment on this point to those who I cannot fail to perceive have exhibited it in all other ways. I see, too, with what constancy they have endeavoured to preserve one uniform breadth of light and clear, decided drawing by the flat surfaces and square treatment of the outline, and I cannot fancy that they would sacrifice these for the sake of a little glitter. It is true that the Greeks introduced gold into their marble works ; that they made shields and other warlike weapons of metal in their Sculpture ; but I can scarcely conceive that they would have done what, in this instance, would have so completely counteracted that which they have so carefully aimed at and attended to—unity of effect.

Several attempts were made and exhibited at the Crystal Palace of colouring in various ways this celebrated frieze, but all of them have appeared to me utter failures, tending to lower and make commonplace and vulgar one of the most refined productions of ancient Art.

Though many fine examples of Greco-Romano Sculpture have come down in an uninjured state, showing no marks of

Colour upon them, we may take it for granted that the practice of tinting had not altogether gone out even at that period. Many passages in Pliny tend to show this, and indicate also that the colouring was effected, not merely by the use of varied materials, but by different pigments. I must confess, however, that, when treating of this subject, it is mostly in allusion to more ancient Greek Art that he speaks. He names Praxiteles as the perfecter of wax or encaustic painting, and records his having said that he preferred those of his works to which Nicias the painter had put his hand. This passage, especially when coupled with others, seems to me, indeed, decisive as to the prevalence of Colour in ancient Greek Sculpture, so that we may consider that part of our question settled. The rubbing of wax, and afterwards dry Colour, into the marble appears to me the only method by which some of the lucid appearance of that delicate material can be preserved under the Colour. All opaque painting is of course out of the question, so that I am inclined to think this was the ordinary method of the ancients, and I believe it was the one taken up by Gibson. There are, it is true, many things used for staining, such as tobacco-water, coffee, &c. ; and copal varnish may be employed as a vehicle when tracing out delicate lines of Colour or ornaments on the edges of draperies. All these are, however, so very simple that I need scarcely dwell upon them ; besides, the purport of my lecture will rather, I believe, be to show the limits by which Colour is necessarily restricted in Sculpture, and the evils that are inherent in it, than to encourage you to practise it. I will go at once into the most commonplace objections to it, because they are perhaps the most direct and practical. Sculpture, as is proved by the remains handed down to us, is of a far more

durable character than Painting. A few centuries cause, under ordinary circumstances, no decay whatever in it; but then it has for this very reason to undergo an accumulation of dirt which of necessity must be removed by cleaning, and no colouring of the kind I have just named, in fact, no painting of a transparent nature, can withstand this: so that the work, however well tinted in the first instance, must eventually depend for its effect on its form alone. On the difficulty of representing reflected tones of Colour, I will say nothing. It stands to reason, or at any rate is well known to every one who has studied the changes that take place in Colours by approximation one to another, that the simple Colour of a statue must become false the moment objects immediately around it are altered, if, indeed, it can be true under any circumstances.

I have said that no transparent tinting can be made to last to anything like the duration of the figure itself. This objection, you will tell me, cannot stand good against the practice of using coloured materials, which has been tried not only in ancient Art but in modern also. Even in our own day the fashion is not altogether gone out. The French resort in their smaller works to the combination of ivory and silver, using the former for the flesh, and the latter for the drapery. I cannot say that to me the union is an agreeable one, or in any way an improvement on the pure white marble, though undoubtedly it pleases the many *cognoscenti* who like to fill their cabinets with the curiosities rather than with the purely beautiful in Art.

Ivory, when used by itself, is one of the most charming substances possible for the purposes of Sculpture, and were it not so limited in size, would undoubtedly be preferred to every other material. It approaches nearer than anything to the

tints of the human flesh, and combines at the same time great strength with fine texture ; and is in consequence capable of receiving the most elaborate and most delicate execution. But then you must not combine other materials with it, nor must you introduce in any way contrast of Colour ; for the presence of other tints betrays at once to the eye that it is not the real Colour of the human skin, but only one of the many that go to make up that which is beyond all other things so difficult to represent in Painting.

Try even to indicate by Colour the eye of an ivory figure, and the whole work loses its refinement, and becomes at once a vulgar, and at the same time unsuccessful effort at imitation. If you agree with me in this, you will no longer consider a simple statuette in ivory as a coloured work. There was, as you may perhaps recollect from his having had specimens in our Great Exhibition, a French artist who introduced coloured materials, such as Egyptian alabaster for drapery and tinged metals for his heads. That they were successful with the peculiar feeling he had for his Art and for the sort of subject he chose, can hardly be denied, though I should be loth to class them as high Art ; and Marochetti, as is well known to you, resorted to Colour in some of his heads, particularly in his admirable bust of his Highness Duleep Singh. This he did by tinting, and I am ready to acknowledge Colour became in this latter instance almost a necessary adjunct to render the effect of the whole complete. Nevertheless, these are to me eccentricities which merely by exception prove the rule : they attain their limit immediately, and, though exciting to the fancy for an instant, are ever found to be out of the proper walk of Art. They call forth no followers and establish no new school, and

it is as well they should not. The most delightful examples of partially-coloured Sculpture not belonging to the antique are the Della Robbia works, of which, unfortunately, we have but few specimens in this country, if indeed, we have any good ones. I was perhaps more delighted with them on my visit to Italy than with any other kind of Art: the peculiarly religious sentiment embodied in them, their purity of line and simplicity of composition, charmed me beyond all else, and the circumstance that their subjects are Christian rendered their appeal to my feelings of a stronger and closer nature. I could wish, indeed, that we had some casts of them in our schools, as they are of a character that would teach the student a style in which he is most likely to be called upon to practise hereafter. In these glazed relievos partial Colour only is attempted. The flesh of the figures is left white, but hints of the nature of the backgrounds are given, such as indicating the sky by a bright but delicate blue, and tinging here and there the wings of the angels that surround the principal figure—the subjects being generally the Annunciation and other Biblical subjects. In the best of them—by Lucca himself, the original discoverer of the method of covering the clay with a vitrified glaze, and in whose works pure sentiment most prevails—the Colour is delicate, well arranged, and never intrudes itself on the eye; but in the works of his successors, of the same name and family, where this sentiment is less expressed—which are in fact but copies in the style, the efforts of pupils to carry out the thoughts and feelings of their master—the Colour is coarser, more positive, and offends by attracting the attention from the main purpose of the work.

I have said that the use of substances containing natural Colours within themselves does away with the want of durability

objected to in the system of staining or painting Sculpture. But then another impediment arises, at least in works of a moderate size, or that are to be submitted to close inspection: the harsh, abrupt contrasts caused by the joining of one material to the other can never be overcome—does not admit of that blending of parts so necessary to a pleasing effect in Art, and ever existing in Nature. We had an instance of this in the portrait-figure of a black-and-white dog exhibited some time back by the late Mr. Wyatt, executed, I believe, for Lord Dudley: the spots on the skin were represented by inserting pieces of black marble into the white. It was well modelled and highly finished, in fact, in every other respect successful; but the Colours failed to blend themselves one with another on their margins, and this defect was so prominent to the eye as to spoil the whole thing. Looking at it from this point of view, it was but a very coarse kind of mosaic. The same thing may be said of all the Coloured Sculpture of the later period of the old Roman school. In the busts of the Emperors, which are made of different coloured marbles and porphyries—the head of one and the drapery of another—contrast is too sudden, too abrupt to be pleasing to the eye; though it must be allowed that in them mere architectural decoration, and not imitation of Nature, is attempted. This objection, though applicable to things to be seen closely, did not, I apprehend, apply to colossal works like those mentioned by Pliny. There the immense size rendered the joinings less prominent, and the joints in the ivory of the flesh, laid on in multitudinous plates, would, from the comparative smallness of the lines, as well as the numberless repetition of them, become insignificant, and the distance from which these statues were viewed would, to a great extent, take



off any abruptness arising from the sudden termination of Colour. The use of gold, too, was, I have no doubt, well understood as having the effect of doing away to a certain extent with that abruptness, and bringing the whole into harmony.

Though the existence of Colour is beyond all doubt in early Greek Art, it would require far more research than I have given the question to decide when it fell into disuse: no allusion, indeed, that I am aware of, exists expressive of the change from coloured to colourless works in the Art. Colour, indeed, can hardly be said to have ever entirely gone out. It held its ground feebly, as I have hinted to you, all through the Roman era; and in the Byzantine or early Christian style a complete revival of it took place. What little, however, exists of the Art in that school may be said to belong quite as much to Painting as to Sculpture, richly-coloured reliefs in which form is but little understood being the chief remains left to us. Colour held its ground, as you know, all through Gothic Art, that is to say, in its monumental records and in the interior decorations of our cathedrals. It was, indeed, long after the Reformation that it began to pale its face before a prejudice grown up against it in this country as belonging to the older creed. There are some objections to Colour which do not tell, however, in the case of these more recent works; the material of which they are composed is of a coarser kind, so that painting serves as a protection to them instead of hiding any inherent beauty of material. Gothic Art partakes, too, more of a matter-of-fact character. It is often historical, but rarely if ever poetical. I have shown enough the existence of Colour in early Sculpture, and have touched upon the technical difficulties it has to contend with: I must now treat the question from an æsthetic point of sight,

by far the most important one, if we are, as I presume, advocates for the advancement of the Art.

It must have been owing to an objection to Colour of this kind that the gradual, though not entire falling-off of it took place in Roman, if not in Greek Art ; and that it was gradual is a proof that it was not a mere impulse, but the result of a quiet, well-considered opinion. That a too literal rendering of Nature renders a work of Sculpture commonplace, if not still more offensive, I need not urge to you ; and that it destroys the purity of the nude, with which the Art has mostly to deal, requires no argument.

The absence of Colour in a statue is, in short, one of the peculiarities that remove it so entirely from common Nature that the most vulgarly constituted mind may contemplate it without its causing any feeling of a sensuous kind. The eye learns to look upon it, not as a real existence, but as a sort of visible representation of some admirable concentrated essence that excites our admiration, or calls forth our imitation ; and it must have been a sentiment of this kind that caused the gradual disuse of Colour in the old times, as well, perhaps, as the occasional revival of it, when the Arts were subservient to rulers of a less refined taste. These objections to the use of Colour apply less to colossal works, whose magnitude in itself removes them from all proximity to every-day life, and again to smaller works where the variation from the natural size prevents a too near approach to reality. I see, in fact, myself, no objection to the use of Colour in such things ; on the contrary, I think, if applied with discretion, it may serve to remove a certain monotony of which Sculpture is accused by those who do not go much with the Art. In some cases, too,

it may be made to help to unite it with the more coloured objects that surround it, and so tend to harmonize the scene to which it belongs as a whole. When a cheerful expression is desirable—as, for instance, in the sculptural decorations of a theatre, a ball or music-room—Colour, even in the statues, will help to keep up that cheerful feeling. Here I may recommend it, but at the same time must caution the student to avoid the objections already urged. He must not attempt a too near approach to fact, for literal truth, as I have before endeavoured to show, is beyond his reach, and, even if he could accomplish it, would not be desirable. But there is no reason why he should not introduce slight indications of Colour to relieve the monotonous surface of the marble. The imitation of the colour of flesh I would counsel him to abstain from entirely: it appears to me, as I have said before, out of the natural limits of the Art. But there is no objection to the introduction of coloured borders to the draperies where an increase of emphasis is given to the line of the figure by so doing. The error to be avoided is the use of dark tints that catch the eye too strongly, and so distract the attention from more important points of the work. This is done sometimes in the small figures exhibited in our shops for sale, where otherwise considerable power of design and good taste are displayed. I do not mean those abominable things called Dresden china—the very essences of affectation, and consequently the things to be of all others avoided by the real lovers of good Art—but the more recent efforts, which come under the name of Parian ware, and which partake of purer form combined with more delicate tinting. They are by no means unsuccessful—are indeed most pleasing; and they, at the same time, show that the love of

Colour in Sculpture is rather advancing than otherwise. You have heard enough of me on this question, but I believe it will not be wholly without service to you. Many temptations are now being set before you to lead you from the simple feeling of old times, when plaster, terra-cotta, marble, and bronze were looked upon as the only materials necessary for Sculpture, and no others were even sought or desired; and the consequence was that sculptors vied with each other in producing Form only of the most beautiful kind: they were steadily devoted to that one purpose, and nothing tended to divert their thoughts from it. Now the public taste seems oscillating between Form and Colour in Sculpture: more attention is given to the introduction of the latter, and to the discovery of new materials to work upon than formerly. It would not do for me to say that this is a sign of decay in the Art, for I have given evidence to you in this lecture of Colour having existed in the best days of the old Greeks, but I would warn you against lending yourself too much to its temptation: it has before now accompanied decay, and most certainly distracts attention from higher points. Kensington Museum is a condensation of beautiful Colour, almost as beautiful as the airy bubbles which Professor Tyndal exhibited to you lately in his interesting lecture on Light. Nothing can be more instructive than it is in Art manufacture, for there indeed, Colour becomes of equal, if not superior importance to Form. The examples in the collection of the pure style of Sculpture are, in fact, few, scarcely worth noticing. The directors place comparatively no value upon them, and yet, as we know, they do not confine themselves to the lower grades in their teaching. Their defence, however, for the adoption of Colour is a good one when they

assert that their schools were established for Art manufactures.

The Royal Academy teaches, or ought to teach, only the top-most walk of Sculpture, and therefore cannot advocate what tends to bring it down to the subordinate one. You will have learnt, I think, from what I have told you that I am not an advocate for the application of Colour to your Art, nor am I wholly antagonistic to it. I would have you use it, if at all, with caution—with the utmost reserve, as a thing which you may resort to only on particular occasions and under special circumstances : I would have you look upon it as a sort of temptation to which you are liable, but which you may partake of with moderation, without injury to yourself or degradation to your Art. I am, in short, a timid reformer. I will advise you as did the old fox in Gay's Fables, who, while preaching abstinence and moderation in their appetites to the younger generation that were gathered around him to witness his dying moments, happened to hear the cackling of hens in the distance, and said to them :

“ Go, but be moderate in your food ;  
A chicken too might do *me* good.”

The consideration of Colour brings us naturally to the many devices employed in Sculpture to compensate for the want of it. The thickening of the eyelids, and even some additional sharpness as well as projection of the brow, and the deep sinking of the eyes themselves within their orbits so as to gather about them even more shadow than in Nature, and so make up for the Colour which exists in these most attractive parts, are, if I may use the expression, legitimate exaggerations—legitimate because, though not truth in themselves, they convey more the effect of truth in Art than would fact if literally given. In

Sculpture the edges of the lips, too, should be more decidedly given than in Nature, to compensate for the difference in tint between them and the other parts of the face, especially in figures to be seen from a distance, where, as you will perceive by examining some of the antique statues, they become almost continuous lines—more continuous, however, it should be recollected, in the plaster casts than in the original marble, owing to the loss of the transparency. In many of the Roman portrait-busts in our Museum you will find the parting of the lips wider—the mouth, in short, slightly open—in order to indicate more distinctly that feature than would be possible, owing to the absence of Colour, were the lips brought closely together. In the treatment of hair, the want of Colour should be compensated for by deep cuttings more or less in portraiture, according as dark or light is intended to be represented. This principle may be, in fact, carried almost through every portion of the composition. It may appear a trifle, but at the risk of being thought an old grumbler I will say that I find but little attention paid to the necessity of compensating for Colour either in our schools or in our annual exhibitions, nor are due allowances made for the transparency of materials. Draperies and other portions of dress are modelled with sharp edges and deep under-cuttings, which, in reality, from the light passing through them, can never produce either acute lines or dark shadows: they are copied in this inferior manner after the fashion of casts of Nature, which, however well done, never accomplish a true representation of what they are taken from.

I have now to take my leave of you for one year, at any rate, and I cannot do so without expressing my deep regret that there should be found so few sculptor-students attending in the

schools of the Royal Academy. In the antique rooms there are generally a few, though not so many as I could wish, for no one can be more conscious than I am of the necessity of due study of ancient Art. In Sculpture it is more particularly requisite, more so than in the other branches, for in it select idealized Form is alone admissible ; and it is in the old Greek school only that this is to be found : but it is rare indeed that I have the pleasure of seeing, when I happen to be visitor in the Life School, many, if indeed any gentlemen practising the Art of Modelling. I am aware that the encouragement given to the Art is small ; that there is but little Sculpture-teaching during the year ; that the rooms, owing to the seats for the painter-students being fixed, and so preventing that close access to the model necessary for the worker in clay, are inconvenient ; and that gaslight is less suitable for the proper carrying out of Form than daylight : but still, I cannot help thinking that students would do well to persevere and contend with these difficulties, rather than, as they appear to me to do, give way under them, and absent themselves from the study of the nude life. What few studies are made in the Life School by sculptors are generally in bas-reliefs, which of course can improve a knowledge of the human figure only in one particular view ; while we all know that one of the difficulties of the Art is the combining all the views of a figure naturally and truthfully, so that they may form a whole complete and perfect in itself. This is a trial peculiar to Sculpture and Architecture alone ; Painting has it not. I can say myself that I find it one of the greatest obstacles to the satisfactory completion of a work, and I would advise the sculptor-student not only more constant attendance in the Academy Life Schools, but also the making his studies in

the round. Bas-relief is a branch of his Art in itself, but it is in my opinion not the one most suited to the student for gaining a thorough acquaintance with the human figure. The purpose of the Life School is to teach the student, after he has become well acquainted with the antique—so well as to be able to distinguish by himself general from individual Form—the endless variety Nature partakes of in the different positions she assumes, as well as through the many influences under which she acts, whether of character or momentary impulses. The removal of the student from the Antique School to the study of the Life is the first step towards making him an original sculptor, and without this step he can never hope to speak his own thoughts, or to be other than an inferior retailer of old ideas.

The late Mr. Bailey, though not, in one sense of the word, a prosperous man, was one of the most successful sculptors of his time ; and I have heard him say that during a number of years—during the whole of the time, in fact, he was a student in the Academy—he was only one evening absent from the Life School ; and no English sculptor was better acquainted with Form, or with that mobility which exists in Nature than he was. His figure of Eve stands yet almost alone in the English school of Sculpture for beauty of line, for delicacy, and at the same time classicality of form. If indeed we take him by his best works, by those executed before the old, hard step-mother, Necessity, began to press cruelly upon him, we shall find in him much to admire, and much from which good may be learnt. I fear, and the duty I owe to my Art obliges me to tell it to you, we have now no students like him. Our school is comparatively deserted by the sculptors.

I shall be glad to find that I am so far wrong that you are



able to say that you pass your time in other academies, and thus are not altogether neglecting the opportunities offered to you. I am aware that many, perhaps most of our young men, are obliged to earn their bread during the daytime by working in the *ateliers* of others; if so, the more the reason that they should devote their evenings to the improvement of themselves in the schools thrown open to them. I do not admit any excuse of being fatigued with the day's work. A young man never feels fatigue, should know nothing of, not even believe in the word; he will learn the meaning of it soon enough, especially if he is a regular attendant at lectures on his profession. I may be told that the requirements of the body call for more even than the work of the day can earn, and that the evenings must be called in to help the many wants to which we are subject. This, again, I do not believe, and to these I would say, do not throw away the golden opportunities of youth for the sake of a few more pence, or slight additional comforts; but lay by a certain amount of your intellect as capital: it will return you interest, and compound interest, that will double your gains hereafter. I am aware that, during the competition for the various medals which the Royal Academy offers, there is an increased attendance of the sculptor-students; but this only proves that their absence at other times is in a great measure, if not altogether, their own fault. Their flocking in only on such occasions is a species of deception which cannot be approved of—not deception of the Academy, for I fear the members take such things little to heart; but a deception of the students themselves, and I must say that it shows itself in the result. We have had occasionally, it is true, admirable specimens put forth in competition for the Academy's gold medals—

I allude more particularly to the last trial of strength—but these have, I am convinced, been caused by admirable private tuition, rather than from study in our schools. The copies in plaster from life, however, rarely, if ever, quite please an old, conceited grumbler like myself. They seem to me generally like Nature, but only like Nature when she is looked upon with the jaundiced eye with which I am now looking on the progress of our Art—that is to say, with no appreciation of beauty. They do not serve to elevate Nature, but rather to make more conspicuous her errors and weaknesses: they are usually lower, more ugly than the model from which they are copied, instead of being more elevated, more lovely, and more attractive; and so become not Greek but Dutch Art. This may appear to you a rather sulky kind of farewell, but it is not meant as such. What I have said to you as students is sincere, and intended for your good, and no man is more competent to speak in this strain than I am, because no one more regrets, now that it is too late, the neglect of the schooling I received, or ought to have received, in this Academy in my younger days; and there is no one who now feels the ill effects of that neglect more than myself. You will find plenty of people to praise your efforts and term them beautiful, and they will please you, perhaps, more than I do by finding fault; though they may in so doing be only exhibiting their ignorance of the principles of Art. To point out errors is quite as much the province of the teacher as the directing the way to excellence; at any rate it is more within his power, for the probability is that he has himself strayed away from the right path more than he has gone ahead in it.

There is one thing yet I would wish, before leaving, to caution the student against, though I hope and trust there is no occasion

for my doing so : I mean the looking on his work with too complacent an eye. When once a man, young or old, gets to fancying that what he does in Art is perfect, he has reached the extent of his stride, and will never advance further, rather indeed go back. I want you to take what is said to you in an earnest spirit of true criticism, and to pay more attention to it than to the flattering, though perhaps sincere, compliments of your friends. You may even learn something from the sarcastic utterances of your enemies. I remember once receiving an anonymous epistle in verse : the words I have forgotten, but the burden of them was, that there was no occasion for the critics to cut up my works, for I cut them up enough myself. The good intentions of the writer I may not unreasonably doubt, but I am certain that his remark was a just one, and I took advantage of it, and set about from that moment to amend my ways, so that, after all, he was one of the kindest friends I ever had. I would thank him for it could I but find out who he was, notwithstanding the profound contempt I feel for all anonymous writers.





## LECTURE VIII.

### EDUCATION.



HAVE determined, if I possibly can, to give you this evening a good lecture ; not one in the ordinary sense of the word, but one of the kind generally styled as rather personal. My language may appear to you, perhaps, rude ; but if I am to constitute myself a physician in Art, I must be allowed to give a clear diagnosis of the disease it labours under, or my prescriptions will neither be believed in, nor productive of good effect. You may reply to me, Physician, cure thyself ; and your reply will not be far from right.

I will acknowledge in myself the error of which I am about to speak, and am as ready to cry *peccavi* as anyone. This point, however, after all, is not of much importance, as the *tu quoque* mode of argument merely adds one more to the number of delinquents in the affair, and is neither justification nor reply. We may arrange that difference after the manner of other preachers of a higher kind, who, instead of using the second pronoun, address their congregations in the first person plural, and say politely, and I have no doubt properly, *we* have sinned.

So I will, if you please, say we Art students, or, to come to those with whom I have more particularly to do, we students in Sculpture are, comparatively with other classes, uneducated ; and still more so if compared with those who, like ourselves, are pursuing highly intellectual callings that require the most earnest efforts of the brain and, in addition, the utmost refinement of feeling. This want of Education, against which I am about to raise my outcry, is not the professional Education the student sculptor obtains, modelling-tool in hand, in our Art schools, nor that intermediate one which he acquires, or ought to acquire, of things intimately connected with his pursuit—such as knowledge of costume, appropriate use of material, and of suitable forms to convey the expression he intends ; though of these much might be said to advantage. The absence or presence of them is shown, in fact, in every year's exhibition, and almost in every man's productions. Whilst in one the insight into costume hardly extends beyond the last most fashionable make of a pair of trousers, in another an intimate acquaintance is displayed, not only with the outer garbs of every age and country, but also with the inward habits and feelings of each, and I need scarcely say how much of true interest is given to his work by these means.

These observations may apply, perhaps, more to Painting than to Sculpture, though they are referable to both ; whilst the proper application of materials and the due selection of forms may be said to have a more powerful, if not a more immediate reference to the Art I profess. It is not, however, on this point, as I have before said, that I am about to scold, or to utter my complaint ; but on the want in the student of that general Education, that constant reading and comparison of other men's

ideas, which enables him to think for himself, and, if not to produce new thoughts, at any rate to avoid the errors of old ones.

In saying that the student should devote more time to general Education, I am not so unreasonable as to expect him to be master of many languages, or a leader in many sciences. Genius, I am aware, springs from all classes, and generally, if not always, develops itself by directing its energies to one particular point; and, presuming Art to be his principal pursuit, I doubt much if the advantage would be very great to him were he capable of attaining to all these, though I do not mind confessing to you that my inability to dive into works in their original tongue, increased by time and forgetfulness, has often been a source of great regret to me.

We have, however, now excellent translations of the classics and admirable treatises on other subjects that enable us to pursue that general reading I am about to advocate almost as well as if cognizant of the languages in which the works are actually written. I would say quite as well, but that I recollect translations are never either quite so clear or quite so forcible as their originals, and I find myself contradicted by one whom I wish you more particularly to study, and who says: "In speaking of things of this kind, such a measure as leaves out any part whatever of the truth is not altogether in measure; for nothing that is imperfect is the measure of anything: though some at times are of opinion that things are sufficiently well when thus circumstanced, and that there is no necessity for further inquiry. Very many are thus affected through indolence." These are Plato's words, or rather, put by him into the mouth of Socrates whilst speaking of the proper mode of argument. Let the

student by all means study that author. I will not deny that it will require of him much patience, that he will find him prolix in style in comparison with the more condensed writers of modern days, and often, owing to inaccuracies of translation, confused and unintelligible ; nor will I deny that the student will perceive, and perhaps be offended with, a certain pedantic manner—more apparent, however, in the English translation than in the original Greek, where interjectional words are rarely, if ever, omitted. He will have, too, it must be admitted, to encounter certain passages of an objectionable character ; but these the classic student will soon learn, if not to excuse, to look upon merely as the indications of a barbarous age. He will have again another difficulty of no small amount to contend with—to recall to mind, in order to thoroughly appreciate the mine of intellectual wealth laid open to him, how much that he now knows and has long believed in—so long and so entirely as almost to appear like instinct—is the accumulation of after-ages. He will, in fact, have to transfer himself mentally to habits and modes of thinking long previous to almost all that he has learned to look upon as ever pre-existent, but it will teach him to become a thinking man, to throw off all prejudices, and never, as the foregoing words indicate, to leave a question without sifting it in all its particles, and examining it in all its various details.

You will, I am sure, expect me to give, as your lecturer, some reason for my advising you to study that which at first may appear to you so distantly connected with your Art. I might tell you, and truly, that you will find in this author frequent allusions to Sculpture, many of them indirect, but for that very reason showing how important a feature the Art was in the age in which

he lived, as otherwise these allusions would not have been so often brought into discourses which appertain to moral philosophy and questions of State government only. All of them tend more or less to show that in Art, beauty, and not mere imitation, was considered as the *sine quâ non*. Some of them I have quoted to you in my former lectures, when advocating this as the right theory, and endeavouring to prove to you that utility and beauty go together in Nature and should do so in Art.

I will now give you some others as evidence of the same idea, and that abstract beauty was ever uppermost in the minds of the Greeks. In Plato's fifth book of the Republic, Socrates is made to say: "That ever was and ever will be deemed a noble saying, that what is profitable is beautiful, and what is hurtful is base." And again, in the same book, as showing that the question of beauty was discussed and a regular theory laid down for the attaining it, Socrates, while discoursing with Glauco on the laws and regulations necessary for the ideal city they are building up in their thoughts, is asked by him to prove the possibility of such an Utopian scheme existing, and says in reply: "Do you imagine, then, that the painter is in any degree the less excellent who, having painted the model of the most beautiful man, and brought everything most fully into his piece, is yet unable to show that such a man does really exist?" In reply to which Glauco says: "By Jupiter, I do not!" And again, in the sixth book of the Republic: "Whether, then, do those appear to you to differ from the blind who have neither a clear example in their soul, nor are able—as painters looking up to the truest example and always referring themselves thither, and contemplating it in the most accurate manner possible—to establish



here too, in like manner, just maxims of the beautiful and good, if there be occasion to establish them, and to guard and preserve such as are already established."

I fear I am wearying you by these quotations, but at the risk of doing so I must trouble you with one more which seems to establish my point. At the end of the seventh book of the Republic, when Socrates has finished his description of the qualities requisite to the governors of this ideal world of his—attributing to them, as necessary to their fitness, a healthy frame of body and a pure, unselfish tone of mind, both enlarged and cultivated by a general yet severe education; calling upon them to practise temperate habits that they may have under their control all their passions, and be above the ordinary temptations of life, and to possess a sincere and disinterested love of their country, that they may arrange the affairs of the State, not for the good of themselves, but for the good of others; and, added to all this, requiring them to be imbued with an aptitude to learn and a powerful memory to retain, so that they may be quick to perceive what is good in that which is new, and to retain that which is valuable in what is old—when Socrates has finished all this, Glauco is made to say in reply: "You have, Socrates, like a statuary, made our governors all beautiful." Would the point of this repartee be intelligible—would it be in the least applicable, except under the supposition that the Greeks in all their Arts, even in portraiture, idealized—looked to beauty as the one end and aim that was to overbalance all else? Would it be applicable to our own statues, in which likeness is considered by some to be the Alpha and Omega, the all and everything? I fear not.

One more quotation, and I have done with this portion of my

argument. If I tire you, you must recollect I forewarned you that the author's style would sound prolix to our modern ears, and that you must become diggers in the hard quartz before you can discover the pure gold of his writings. The Athenian guest, Socrates, alludes to the fixed laws in Egypt with respect to the Arts, whether of Painting, Sculpture, or Music. He says, in the second book of the Laws: "It appears that the Egyptians formerly knew that young men in cities should be accustomed to beautiful figures and beautiful melodies, and it is one of their institutions to exhibit in their temples what these are, and what the qualities which they possess; and besides these, it is not lawful, either for painters or other artificers of figures, to introduce any that are new, or even to think of any other than those belonging to their country, nor is it lawful at present to do this either in these particulars or in the whole of Music. If you observe, therefore, you will find that paintings and sculptures there, which were executed ten thousand years ago [thus it is written], are neither more beautiful nor more deformed than paintings or carvings of the present day, but are fashioned by just the same Art." It may not be much information to you to quote all this as evidence of a question long since decided, and decided from the works themselves, but surely it is interesting to find an opinion of this kind corroborated by an author of ancient times—an almost contemporary one, and, moreover, one that belonged to a nation who, with regard to their Art, were exactly of the opposite way of thinking; who, instead of fixing laws for the beautiful, were ever seeking in it something higher and higher; whose cry in their Art might truly be said to be "Excelsior! Excelsior!" You will, in truth, gather by reading much information connected with Sculpture.

Thus, perhaps, you will come to the conclusion by inference that the Greeks made their models in wax, as is not improbable supposing they used small instead of full-sized ones. Of what that wax was composed, whether made by the bees of Hymettus, so often brought forward for the purpose of comparison with mankind, we know not; nor is the question altogether of much importance, as it is one of antiquarianism rather than of practical utility.

You will be confirmed, too, in your belief that these right-thinking people in Art avoided perspective in their relieve Sculpture, or, at any rate, used it with the utmost caution and in the most limited manner; not from ignorance of its rules, but because with what is called common sense they perceived that in a work where real or even partial relief is given, it could only remain true when viewed from one particular point. There are allusions to perspective which show that its laws had been studied, if not by the artists, at any rate by the philosophers of the day; besides, you will recollect that the Greeks were great geometricians and great architects as well as great sculptors; and that it consequently could not well have escaped their attention. That the rule of abstinence on this point stands good, and forms one of the chief distinctions between antique relieves and mediæval or more modern ones, I need not say to you. Its soundness is clearly proved even by the departure from it in later works, such as the magnificent gates by Ghiberti, which, notwithstanding the eulogium said to have been passed on them by Michael Angelo, and their splendid design and workmanship, are still, undoubtedly, errors in this respect. That many things tended to foster this simplicity of treatment in ancient Art, I will not deny. Their theatrical arrangements were of the same primitive kind: their stages, though possessed

of considerable breadth, had none of that depth which with us admits of such powerful and charming delusions of the eye. The Greeks had nothing of this: just room enough for the principal, indeed, sole character to stand before the audience and tell his sorrows or his joys, with the chorus, the strophe and antistrophe of the piece, one on each side to say or sing their comments on the tale. This was all that was attempted. Their actors depended not so much on scenic effect as on the power of the poetry; and I am inclined to think—indeed, am sure—that the two Arts, Sculpture and the Drama, went together in this feeling. You will ask me how I gather all this. I might say that I can perceive in many of their relievos representations evidently taken from these simple stage effects. I will acknowledge to you that I am aware of no remains of an antique Greek stage existing; but there is in that city of the dead, Pompeii, that lies like a disinterred carcase of the past, with all its vices and superstitions exposed to the broad glare of day, one which may be easily and justly deemed similar in its character. The orchestra still stands, the lamps are there, though the lights, the audience, and actors are no more; but it requires but little imagination to fill up the silence of the scene with the primitive yet classical figures in their tragic and comic masks, chanting, perhaps in a somewhat monotonous, but for that very reason impressive manner, the grand epic poetry to which Plato so frequently alludes—so frequently as to show that the power of rhythm, the music of the voice, the art of oratory or persuasion by the tongue, was considered as one of the most necessary accomplishments of a leader of the people, or, in other words, of an educated man.

It is not, however, for these allusions—of which I might

quote many more if I pleased—that I advise your studying the books of Plato, nor yet because there is matter contained in them that would serve you well for illustration by your Art, though of this there is no scarcity. I will give you a subject from him which, in spite of my dislike to it as pagan, and for that reason lacking the necessary appeal to existing associations and feelings, would, in the hands of a clever sculptor, form one of the grandest compositions known—one that might rival, without being a copy of it, Michael Angelo's "Last Judgment" in intricacy of grouping, in display of form, and in variety of attitude. It is a curious fable related at the end of the tenth book of the Republic, of Erus, the son of Armenius, who is said to have died in battle, but whose body remained uncorrupted, and who saw a vision of the Judgment, of which he afterwards, on his return to life, gave a description. It reminds one, in its dreamy and indistinct grandeur, of the vision of St. John at Patmos, in our book of Revelation. The departed are described as rising from two chasms of the earth, and the judge as sitting between them, sending some to the right and some to the left. The Fates, Lachesis, Clotho, and Atropos, the children of Necessity, and the mistresses of the Past, the Present, and the Future, are portrayed on their thrones supported on eight circles in the heavens, and as distributing new lots to the souls who are again to undergo the labours and trials of life, and who are bound to abide by that lot, the choice being left to them whether to make it happy or unhappy, good or evil, by virtue or vice. These souls then pass on into the parched plains of Lethe, where nought of earth can exist, and after drinking of the River Amelete, where all memory fades, return once more to the troubles and labours of this world.

Of these waters of oblivion Erus was not allowed to drink, and so he alone came back to tell the tale. Thus the doctrine of the transmigration of souls is promulgated—a doctrine not so absurd as some may fancy, nor yet entirely obliterated from the minds of imaginative men, even in these later days of more complicated and, perhaps, more enlightened thought.

It is not even for the sake of these, however, that I advise your tasting the fruit of this tree of intellectual life, nor yet again for the pleasure you may derive from it by imagining yourself walking in the sacred groves and listening to the conversation of men who, so far removed from these days, are yet the real representatives of pure truth. You may dream, so to speak, of the manners and customs of that ancient period, more delightful, perhaps, when viewed as now with the classical drapery which time and history have thrown over them, than when gazed upon in their naked reality. You may enjoy all this, call up these men searching after truth by discussion and comparison of ideas in the innermost depths of the human mind, and endeavouring to trace it from thence to its first great cause, its true and only derivation. You may wonder that, amidst so much of surrounding ignorance and filth, men of such pure thought and such profound knowledge should arise—men who, though laying no claim to inspiration, seemed to have foreseen the history of nations even up to the present day by the simple process of judging from cause to effect; so much so that you feel sometimes inclined to turn to their biography to convince yourself that they were not born in the present century instead of 400 years before Christ, or to ask yourself, Has man changed so little in his general nature that what was true with regard to him so many ages back, and under such different

circumstances, is still equally true of him under all the changes that have since occurred? You may fancy them building up their imagined republics, their ideal commonwealths, that should be permanent because united by laws that were founded on permanent principles. You may imagine them ignorant of the many changes that were hereafter to take place to confound and defeat the millennium they advocated, and in which they all, to a certain extent, believed because they were confident of the good within themselves, and gave credit, as do all right-minded men, not only for the possession of a like good in others, but for the gradual increase of it as intellect advanced and the daylight of the mind became more clear.

Artists are fond of contemplating these figures, standing out, few in number, from the dark background of a semi-barbarous age that gives to them a prominence, a dignity, a largeness of parts, a statuesque effect, which is agreeable to the educated eye of a sculptor. That they had so little about them to help them in their search after truth, so few accessories to set them off, seems in unison with grand Art of every kind, but more particularly with the great Art of Sculpture, then in the very zenith of its glory. That they were ignorant of the many discoveries of after-ages appears rather to add to their power of taking an uninterrupted view of the future before them. That they knew nothing of the needle-gun, the chassepot, the mitrailleuse, and other scientific and artistic inventions that have since tended to promote civilization and increase the happiness of mankind; that they were unaware of any more explosive instrument than their wives' tongues seems to have enabled them to take a larger grasp of greater matters, to look at what they were working at as a whole that should come right at last; not

by the undue prominence of lesser parts, but by a subjugation of them all to one great aim and final effect.

It is not even for all this that I beg your attention particularly, though not exclusively, to this author, Plato; but because I wish you to be philosophers as well as artists. You can, indeed, hardly be the latter in any degree without being at the same time something of the former; for Socrates defines a philosopher as one who is desirous of discerning the truth, and your calling brings you in contact with some of the purest and most sublime truths in Nature, and upon these you have to build the philosophy of your Art. The philosophy I wish you to feel and follow is not the indifference of the cold Stoic, for no artist, whether painter or sculptor, can ever be great with that tone of mind: it is rather of the Epicurean kind, of one who loves Nature earnestly, sees propriety and beauty everywhere in her, and endeavours by study to understand the means by which she works as well as the purpose she has in view, looking always upward from Nature's self to Nature's God. You should, like poor Jaques, be a lover of contemplation, a strong sympathizer with sorrow, and a bitter hater of cruelty and oppression. You should "find tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in everything;" but without, like him, wrapping yourself up in the motley garb of conceited melancholy. Really good Art requires a high flight to reach, and I would always have you feel a high respect for it; but artists are apt to make the mistake of thinking there is nothing of equal importance round and about it, whereas there is hardly anything worth knowing that may not be brought in as assistance to it. Standing alone, your professional pursuit, Sculpture, can scarcely be said to be one that tends to



strengthen your understanding. It is rather one of sentiment, of feeling and refinement ; it helps more to purify than to enlarge your power of thought. It was so, in fact, in Ancient Greece, when there was but little else than it and Poetry to soften the sensuous coarseness of the day ; and I believe this is all it can be expected to do now, but this all is enough. You are bound to use every means in your power in aid of your efforts in your Art, and Education on extraneous subjects will help you almost as much as a knowledge of those matters more immediately connected with your profession. It will help you in two ways—in the unprofessional duties of your life, wherein decisions arrived at or actions taken from sentiment alone are rarely, if ever, sound or judicious ; and it will give you in your Art just that amount of good judgment which will redeem it from an inane, meaningless pursuit. General Education may be likened to a growing of your wings, and instead of your struggling upwards towards your Art, I can fancy you soaring, by its aid and genius combined, to such a height as to be able to swoop down eagle-like upon it from above. At any rate, an increased Education, a more constant reading of other men's thoughts, and a diligent, careful, and at the same time modest comparison of them with your own can be but a source of delight to you if well and honestly carried out, and must, I believe, be of infinite service to you in your work.

There are those, I know, who argue in the opposite direction—advise your devoting your undivided attention to your Art, urging as examples of their argument and belief, the existence of men who have stood out in distinctive excellence from their competitors without the aid of much general knowledge ; but the doctrine that unprofessional Education is comparatively of

little value in Art, though it may apply imperfectly, if at all, to Painting, where we have schools, good in their way, that show no evidence of it—the Dutch for instance—is wholly valueless in Sculpture, which grasps at the highest only. I should, from the career of these very men, gather the contrary notion. I should say that they would have gone much further had they had the help I allude to; and I should assert with equal confidence that many of their contemporaries might have gained an equal eminence had they been assisted by higher Education and more extensive reading. I believe, in fact, that if ever Art is to advance it will be by the cultivation of the *general* powers of those who practise it. At any rate, I can say that the men who carried it to its highest point in mediæval Italy, if not in ancient Greece, were men of learning in other things than that for which they are renowned. They were poets, mathematicians, engineers, and inventors of various kinds outside of their Art; studiers of human nature in other ways than on canvas or in marble—in short, philosophers. The theme they were called upon to illustrate was a high one, and they brought their learning to bear upon it, and so became not only great men themselves, but by these means made their Art itself greater. My object in this lecture is not to concentrate your thoughts wholly on your Art, but to stretch them out beyond it while you pursue your profession. The bond between you and it need never be broken, for the effect will tend to enlarge your field of meditation, will enable you to compose things belonging to that Art on a broader, grander scale, and to grasp its principles with a stronger hold. However well the sculptor may model, however skilful may be his hand, he can only, after all, as I have said before, reflect in his work that which is within himself. The

uneducated one sees only those things that are immediately around him—what is worse, has no means of comparing them with that which has been before : while, on the other hand, the educated one takes within the range of his vision the whole horizon of his profession, looks back from his path upon what has gone before him, and forms his judgment as to what are the causes which affect the style and fashion of the present moment, and have produced the many changes which have taken place in previous times ; and he estimates which of those causes are of a permanent character, and which are merely the vagaries of a momentary impulse. What a safeguard is here for those who, possessing genius, are desirous of handing down their names to posterity instead of prostituting their Art to the immediate whims of a moment for the sake of worldly gain or a temporary reputation ! I wish you to be thinking men. We all lay claim to the faculty of thought, but, like every other power, it may be improved, if not created, by Education. Many of us fancy we are thinking when we are merely talking to ourselves, and while flattering ourselves that we are considering a question in every way, are only, perhaps unconsciously, probing it with such arguments as will lead to the verdict we are, from interested motives, most desirous of arriving at. In these self-communings it may be said, indeed, that the wish is father to the thought much oftener than we are inclined either to acknowledge or to perceive. Right thought may be compared to the turning about of an irregular cube ; the really considering man examines it in every direction, looks at it on every side, tries it in every view, and after comparing the advantages of, and objections to each, eventually places it on the right base, on which it not only looks the best but will stand the safest. The prejudiced, unthinking

man places all his cubes, however different in shape, on the same base. The right thinking I have here endeavoured to portray to you you will learn from a study of the works in question, for in none other do I find such a searching mode of arriving at abstract truth ; and that they treat of moral laws of right and wrong rather than of physical sciences makes them not the less suited to your Art, which appertains, or should appertain, more to the former than the latter. The abstract for Sculpture, the picturesque for Painting, is a good saying, almost a proverb ; you as sculptors should therefore more particularly study these writers. I would have you even try and copy the manner of search after the abstract employed by them in order that you may adapt it to your own calling and requirements, and if possible arrive at the same right result.

The books of the Laws to which I have already once referred are particularly interesting, for though they consist merely of propositions never perhaps entirely carried out, they contain much of the then existing feeling, and thus throw you into that atmosphere under which your Art once flourished. Their character is Socialistic, for they limit the amount of wealth to be possessed by each citizen ; they treat of the laws of marriage, of the bringing up of children, and of the education of youth, beginning with a remarkable and most suggestive sentence, which is asserted to be worthy of being written in paternal temples : " The first year is the beginning of the whole of life to every one." They regulate the mode of buying and selling, fixing certain days of the month for the sale of certain articles, and, as it seems, denying the legality of the middle-man or broker ; they limit the privilege of foreigners desirous of residing with them ; they institute courts of justice for the trial

of causes, and legislate on all crimes, from the greatest—pronounced to be sacrilege, and to be so execrable as to be beyond all punishment—down to the smallest peccadillo. Bees must have been an item of considerable importance with the ancient Greeks, the many allusions made to them in Plato show it; and here a distinct law is laid down for their preservation. It says: "If any one usurps a swarm of bees, alluring them by the sound of brass, and thus rendering them familiar to him, he shall make a restitution to the injured person." It declares it, too, to be unlawful to gather apples and pears secretly, and that if any one is detected gathering them who is under thirty years of age, he is to be chastised, but without wounds; and that the free-born man is not to suffer any punishment for this chastisement: so we may conclude that Greek boys were in the habit of doing much the same as English ones; and that the law has not been altered since, I know from experience. You will say all this has not much to do with your Art. It has not, but I am trying rather to coax you away from it in order that you may return to it with a redoubled bound. You will find in the writings of the Roman author, Pliny, many names of artists and allusions to celebrated works, also historical records of your profession, mixed up, it is true, with much fiction. These I would undoubtedly have you read, but it is, I think, in the discussions of Plato that you will learn that tone of mind which I have ventured to call the Philosophy of your Art.

Of the many higher things contained in these books it is not for me to speak, as they do not come within the province of a lecturer on Art. The world has almost decided upon them, has put down the chief speaker in these dialogues and the doctrines

he inculcates as the proper precursors of that doctrine of a still higher kind, which we now live under and believe in. Read carefully, and I doubt if you will differ much from this opinion. I have in this, as well as in my former course of lectures, advised your abandoning pagan subjects for your Art, from the want of that sympathy with them in the public mind requisite to create an interest in your work, and I might now, if necessary, give you another reason for so doing. I might prove to you, or you may prove to yourselves by reading Plato's second book on the Republic, that even in the very country and at the very epoch when polytheism was the prevailing creed, and the gods were represented as changing their shapes as well as their characters, and as acting for evil quite as much as for good, a philosophy had sprung up among thinking men which ridiculed the fables of Homer and Æschylus, declaring them unfit for the common ear as having within themselves an immoral tendency ; and which acknowledged for its head or deity a single indivisible Essence or Spirit, unchangeable because in itself perfect, the origin of good and good only. If Socrates could turn up his nose, so admirably constructed for that purpose, at the absurdities then prevalent, imbedded as they were in the grandest poetry, how much more should you turn your back upon them in an Art which, if it would have success, must ever be the mirror of the light of its own day rather than the faint reflector of the dim shadows of past ages !

We are by prejudice an aristocratic people, believers in the influence of high birth and long descent, and if I have shown you that your Art grew out of mere imitation into an imaginative, creative power among a people who were themselves the first

pioneers of independent thought ; that its greatest purity and highest style were attained, and its proper end and aim discovered almost contemporary with the first declaration of the existence of the soul, not put forth as a mere dogma of faith, but demonstrated by the unanswerable arguments of sound reasoning ; if I remind you that Sculpture rose to perfection at a moment when the sentence "Know thyself" was read from the Delphic Oracle and discussed in their schools of philosophy—I shall, I hope, at least have imbued you with increased respect for it, and an enthusiasm which will lead you on to loftier aspirations and more strenuous exertions.

The great Flaxman was a studier of these writings, I believe, in their original language, and I think it is not too much to say that both his character as a man and the style of his works were influenced, if not wholly formed, by that study. If so, can you have a better example of their effect? It may not be what is called practical advice that I have given you in this lecture, though it is far easier to say what advice is practical than to define what is not. For my part I can only tell you that I feel strongly that the counsel I have now endeavoured to put before you will be found in the highest degree practical to you, whether as artists or as men, if you do but try it rightly. I am compelled myself to feel it so, as much or more from my want of it as from any partial or imperfect presence of it within me. I would have you be, in your search after knowledge, like the miser with his money, who the more he has the more he requires. There will always be this difference between you and him, that while he is obliged to keep his accumulations to himself, you may give

away as much as you please and yet be never the poorer ; and some of it you may assuredly afford to give to your Art. I would have you to feel and confess yourself, in Byron's words, to be

“ As a youth  
Picking up pebbles by the great ocean Truth ; ”

and some of these pebbles, those of the brightest kind, will, I doubt not, be found profitable in your profession. Try.







## LECTURE IX.

### PORTRAITURE.



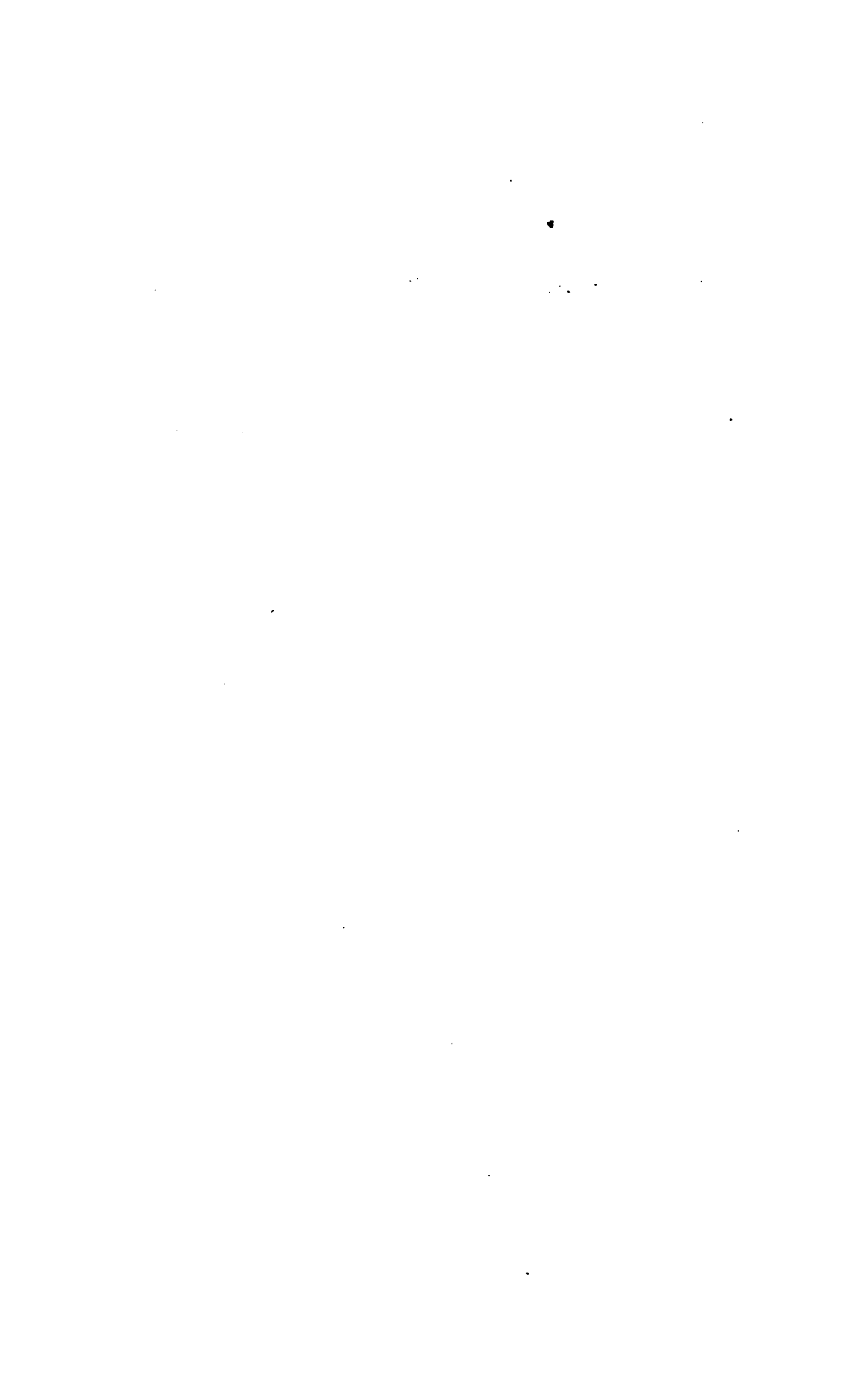
**I**N Portraiture, Sculpture departs more than in other walks from the severe style of the antique—is compelled to do so from the necessity of representing in itself the prevalent feeling of the epoch to which it belongs. Yet I think we shall find that, as it advances in excellence, it returns more closely to the simple spirit of old times, and endeavours to carry out its effect by the same means as were then employed—namely, dependence on the natural contour of the human frame rather than on a flow of redundant and complicated drapery, and reliance on simple attitudes and expressions rather than on an affectation of grace or on overstrained action.

One of the great mistakes that sculptors make, or have made, in this line of Art, is the supposing that the adoption of antique habiliments is the proper method of assimilating their work to that of ancient Art, and in never for a moment discerning, that it is not in any peculiarity or adaptability of the costumes of the old works, but in the thorough simplicity of treatment, that their excellence consists, and that that simplicity is as suitable to modern dress and time as to any other. It is by this sim-



STATUE OF LORD AUCKLAND.

*H. Walker, R.A.*



plicity of treatment that a portrait statue becomes thoroughly sculpturesque in its character, in fact, high Art ; whilst a faithful adhesion to costume prevents its being in any way false or anachronistic in its effect.

It is much the fashion with artists and Art critics to run down Portrait Sculpture ; to declare it to be an inferior class of Art, requiring less imagination, less power of thought, and less refinement of feeling than the Ideal : and I am not altogether disinclined to believe that there is some slight foundation for the opinion ; yet I fancy that the power of producing a fine portrait figure is quite as rare as, if not more so than, the faculty of carrying out an Ideal one, and sometimes think that success in one or the other arises rather from a difference than an inferiority in the tone of mind of the producer.

Whilst one man is imbued with a feeling of beauty which he perceives in Nature, and which he endeavours to condense in his work as a whole, another is impressed with a strong sense of character which he finds in individuals, and which tends, in his opinion, not only to express the distinctions of each, but to produce that infinite variety of which he is more particularly an admirer. Be this as it may, it is to Portraiture that modern Sculpture has mostly devoted its attention, and I may add that in it it has mostly obtained success. I will go further ; I will say that it is in this department that its efforts must in future be mostly called forth—a heretical opinion for which I feel myself bound to give a reason. It is this : whilst in ancient Greece Art stood as an instructor of the people on equal, or nearly equal, terms with Literature, owing to the restricted means that then existed of spreading ideas, History and Poetry have now, through the agency of printing, usurped the province

of Art of impressing all those ideas of grace and beauty which then belonged to the latter more particularly to impart. It is not too much to acknowledge that both of these are more powerful than Art for this purpose, are less limited in their means, more comprehensive in their grasp, and more universally suggestive to the recipient of their instructions. Every Art must have a purpose, and a purpose adapted to, and required by the epoch in which it exists; and physical form—material entity—is the only thing now left that can be more forcibly impressed on the senses by Sculpture than by description. We read in History of the causes that have made a country distinguished; or in Biography the direction of a man's thoughts who has become eminent by the events of his life; Poetry sings his praise for his good deeds, or expresses its contempt for his evil acts: but it is by Art alone that we can retain his form and figure as it existed while he lived, and whilst the efforts by which he has made himself famous were being brought to a result.

How often do we, whilst reading an eventful life, endeavour to picture to ourselves the features of the man who has been the chief agent in the story, or whose intellectual success has enabled him to resist, and may be conquer that decree of fate which at first seemed set against him! How often do we turn to the representation of him at the frontispiece of our book, in the hope of a moment's imaginary conversation with one who has so excited our admiration or wonder, thinking that by so doing we may gain a yet clearer insight into his character, and a closer intimacy with his brain!

This, his physical form, is the one thing which Art can alone perpetuate, and which no verbal description can thoroughly and

faithfully convey ; and it is for this reason that Sculpture, as well as the other Arts, is, and in my opinion ever will be, so constantly employed on this object. I might urge upon you many other reasons, such as family affections, private friendships, and mutual admiration, that tend to give an impetus to Portraiture which Ideal Art has not ; and so help in the same direction, but this one reason is to me sufficient. Let us consider in what Likeness consists.

It is not so much by the truthful copying of each individual feature, but in the proper placing them together, that an accurate resemblance is obtained, in the same way that the imitation of each limb or part of the figure separately will not produce a recognizable portrait so much as the proper uniting of them as a whole. It is, in short, the difference in the joining together of the features, one with another, in the human frame that produces that marked individuality which exists in such infinite variety in Nature ; so infinite that, amid the countless numbers that surround us, we have never yet found, and in all probability never shall find, two people so alike as not to be distinguished when brought in juxtaposition one with another. Were it possible, indeed, for our features to be separated and placed in a row on the table, I doubt much whether they would be recognizable one from another. Some would appear, perhaps, handsomer, better shaped, than others, but all individuality would be gone, and our friends, while endeavouring to put them together again, would, not improbably, assign to us that which did not belong to us, as they are sometimes in the habit of doing whilst picking us to pieces. The same may be said of likeness with regard to the entire figure. It is not each individual part by itself, but a right com-

bination of the whole that constitutes real resemblance. This, then, the portrait sculptor has more particularly to attend to, he has to take care, not so much that each feature by itself resembles his original, as that each is in its relative position with the others: the least departure from this will more or less diminish similitude, as well as destroy that harmony of parts which exists in the face and figure of every living being, however different his appearance may be from what we term abstract beauty. Do not, when you begin your work, set to with any idea of what is called improving Nature, but rather look up to her with humble reverence. You will always find something in your sitter which your Art cannot reach, cannot come up to; but you will arrive nearer that something by looking on it with a loving eye than by setting up notions of your own with regard to your Art, which, even if they be correct in themselves, may not be suitable to the individual you are endeavouring to represent. There are other things that help to success in likeness, if indeed they are not the principal agents in it—the seizing the most characteristic expression and attitude, both of which are in Nature capable of immense changes—are, in fact, hardly for two minutes the same. Still there is always one expression in particular that remains on the memory, and so appears to belong persistently to the sitter; and most decidedly every man, woman, and even child is more or less prone to one particular attitude, or has some peculiar habit by which he or she is recognized, even at a distance when features are scarcely visible to the eye. It is the absence of this quality that sometimes causes entire failure in photography, where every part of the face or figure must necessarily be correct, or, if not quite correct, at any rate more so than in any resemblance

produced by fine Art. The photographer takes but one sitting, in all probability knows nothing of his sitter until the moment when he commences his process, and so is ignorant of any remarkable manner he may have of carrying himself, or of any peculiar expression he may be in the habit of putting on when animated by that which interests him, or by what has been the more continuous employment of his life. The artist, if I may so call him, guided by his own notions of grace or dignity, fixes him in an attitude which does not belong to him, and the result is a complete absence of all characteristic likeness.

The students have this year, again, a most valuable lesson in Portraiture from the Exhibition of Old Masters in the rooms of the Royal Academy: the Exhibition consists, in fact, more of Portraiture than any previous ones; and I do not see why the sculptors should not take part of that lesson to their Art as well as the painters to theirs. What do we find, and what do we not find, in the examples shown us by the greatest masters—Titian, Velasquez, Rembrandt, Vandyck, Romney, Reynolds, and, I will add, Gainsborough? We find under these great names everywhere truth, but nothing of that looseness of style, that wishy-washy softening of parts, which, under the name of flattery, is so prevalent in modern Art. Flattery in the Portraiture of recent days means to omit or soften down all that is not considered, according to the notions of the day, handsome; to indicate, rather than fully imitate peculiarities; to paint or model the man so as to bring him somewhat closer than he is to the standard of beauty. In short, to rub him out just so far that he may still be dimly visible within the misty halo that surrounds him. There is nothing of this in the old works—at least, there does not appear to me to be; on the



contrary, every peculiarity of face or figure is truthfully delineated and strongly insisted on, every characteristic expression unreservedly portrayed. The attitudes are chosen, not so much for their conventional grace, as for the sake of marking individuality. Some of the positions are, in fact, anything but graceful, though they are always such as belong more particularly to the sitter, and designate most strongly his tone of mind and employment in life. There is no shirking in the drawing of any part; no hiding, or even diminishing, of any feature that may be ungainly, or not exactly according to the rules of beauty.

The painters have submitted themselves to what they found before them, and have felt that the altering of any one portion would disturb, if not destroy, the harmony of the whole. The consequence is, that these remembrances of the past, these actors on a bygone stage, could they be released from their canvases and brought again to life, would possess all that variety they had in their original existence, would fulfil the same parts, would act and think in the same manner as before. I would instance as an example of this the portrait of a Dancing Lady, not altogether unobjectionable, though the objections seem to lie more with the lady herself than with the picture, which in itself is admirable. I would call your attention to the courage with which the painter, Gainsborough, has portrayed her character, not maliciously, but truthfully; how he has set her before you in her best occupation, or, as I may say, with her best leg foremost; how fearlessly and unmistakably he has copied the artificial rouge on her cheeks, and given her fascinating smile, not altogether that of a pure-minded and high-bred woman, but with something of the serpent mixed with it.

The lesson of truth I would wish to impress upon you may

be carried too far in this instance ; but still it is a lesson which will give you courage and enable you to accomplish better things under better circumstances, whether you are working as painters or sculptors.

I cannot help, too, calling your attention to the portrait of Mrs. Drummond Smith, by Romney, where treatment, a different thing from flattery, has conquered one of the most unmanageable head-dresses it ever had to contend with, and placed under it one of the most lovable countenances ever possessed by woman or portrayed by Art. The sculptor would not be able to reproduce this costume so literally and yet so inoffensively as the painter has done, for the means he has at command would prevent him ; but by studying what Romney has here accomplished, he may learn the value of breadth, and how much can be done by taste to unite the peculiarities of fashion with the requisites of Art. These wonderful works may, as I have said before, serve as a lesson to the portrait sculptor as well as the portrait painter : the simplicity of background in many of them, the subduing of subordinate parts by means of light and shade and colour, so as to give the face its due prominence, may suggest to him the like, though he will have to attain it by different means. The faithful adhesion to costume, often to an extent that conveys an awkwardness to the figure, may render him more cautious in his departure from it when tempted to do so for the sake of what is called classicality of treatment. The two Arts are separate from each other, but he may recollect that in the different outposts occupied by each, of which Portraiture is one, they come nearer to one another than in those parts where their great strength lies. There is one thing I would wish these fine

examples of Painting not to suggest to the sculptor, and I lay more stress upon it because I have of late been pained by noticing that painters advocate it as strongly for Sculpture as for their own calling. I mean the dependence on what is called touch. Its pleasing effect in painting can be denied by no artist, whether painter or sculptor, for, besides conveying the impression of a master hand, and imparting the charm of facility, the loose and indefinite surface thereby attained agrees with, and compensates for the endless variety produced in Nature by the momentary changes of light and constant movement of parts. It helps, too, the transparency of shadow so requisite in all good Art. But sketching on canvas with the brush is one thing, and sketching in clay or marble with the modelling-tool or chisel is another. Accident, even, will sometimes aid the skill of the painter, but in no case will the hard stone lend itself willingly to the sculptor's purposes; so that his efforts in this direction must at the best be but an affectation of facility. There are other reasons besides this which render vague, indefinite, sketchy kinds of treatment unadvisable: Sculpture has to undergo endless changes of light, and to appear well finished, if not effective, in all of them. It does not, like Painting, contain its light and shade within itself, so that touches which are powerful in one light become powerless, if not worse than powerless, in another.

Could we secure our figures being fixed constantly in the same place, and, like Joshua, make the sun to stand still—neither of the two very likely—it might be otherwise, as then the chiaro-oscuro would be ever, as it is in Painting, the same; and touches would be effective, and convey the impression of real form at all times. As it is, the sculptor is obliged to ex-

pose his statue, while working it, to every possible variety of light ; and it is by these means, and these means alone, that he can obtain that degree of finish, that undulating yet solid surface which enables it afterwards to stand the test of any and every light it may have to undergo. Nothing but highly wrought Sculpture will do that. No, the sculptor must avoid in his Art that tricky touch so fascinating in these fine paintings, and depend entirely on really honest, laborious workmanship—not merely mechanical workmanship, of course, but workmanship combined with taste and feeling. I have an idea that the ancient Greek sculptors, in whose statues the highest degree of real finish is displayed, must have submitted them to the influence of open air light whilst working on them, in order to obtain that finish ; an experiment never yet, that I am aware, tried by a modern sculptor. The great use that this Exhibition of the Old Masters must be to the portrait sculptor, is to teach him to enter thoroughly into the character of the person he is representing, to dive deep into his mind, to fancy himself, if possible, acting and thinking as would his sitter, and to watch his prevailing habits and peculiar expressions ; in short, to get rid for a moment of his own personality, and take up, as I am convinced these Old Masters did, that of him he is endeavouring to perpetuate in his model.

One more comment on these old portraits and I have done ; this time a technical one. I wish you to observe their compactness, the comparatively small dimensions in which, whether merely heads or whole-lengths, they are contained ; and I will endeavour to show you by-and-by that the same quality is found in all good Portrait Sculpture. And this compactness in one Art may suggest to you to imbue another with the same

excellences. The student in Sculpture may learn from them to give simplicity and breadth to his figures, if not by light and shade, by fewness of parts and by subduing each part so that it may take its proper place and no more. He may learn not to run astray into extravagance of space for the sake of displaying that which ought to be of inferior value. The sculptor has more restraint on him in this respect than the painter, for the marble in which he has to carry out his ideas is limited in size, and, moreover, expensive ; but there are other reasons besides this. A want of reserve in the draperies (Bernini's error), or other accessories, takes from the importance of the head, which should, under any circumstances, whether in Painting or Sculpture, be the attractive point. The eye loses power and becomes fatigued by having to wander over a large and comparatively uninteresting surface. The Roman antique head of Vitellius is an example of strong individuality and truthful Portraiture. That it is coarse, more direct in expression than the paintings of the Old Masters we have been speaking of, arises from the natural propensities, particularly the evil ones—such as gluttony—being more clearly developed, because less restrained by the usages of society in early than in later times, rather than from any change of principle or wish to modify in the more modern productions. I have mentioned this head to you as an example of faithfulness : I may now set it up as one of economy, and there are many more of the like kind belonging to the antique Roman school. In this instance the sculptor seems indeed to have felt that having obtained all he desired by the head and face alone—after all perhaps not the most agreeable of results—it was unwise to load the bust with the heavy chest and shoulders, which would only have tended to reduce the power of the head, and at the

same time render the whole still more objectionable and disgusting. The same principle is evident in the antique portrait statues; they are all compact, contained within a simple yet somewhat restricted space, never running astray for the sake of redundancy of line or display of unnecessary attitude. Chantrey used to say that every standing portrait statue should be contained within a shape resembling a ninepin. The observation is not very profound, and must be taken with a licence; but it is of a practical kind, and serves to express what I have endeavoured to impart to you—namely, the necessity of keeping within bounds in your accessories, and of never departing much from the naked form, even when covered with draperies or other habiliments. Both Greek and Roman portrait statues possess these qualities of reserve, as you will see by examining them, the finer ones more even than the inferior ones. We have had in this country sculptors of no inconsiderable eminence, more or less professedly belonging to portrait Art, and the best are represented in the Exhibition of Old Masters now going on. Some have confined themselves almost wholly to it, whilst others have mixed it up with the other branches; each one, however, is eventually judged of by that in which he is most successful, and classed accordingly.

We recognize Roubiliac as a portrait sculptor, though he was great in other things; and we put down Chantrey as such, because there is little that he has left of any value outside of this department; while I may mention Behnes as having devoted his talents still more exclusively to it. If I single out these three names as the most prominent on the list, the most marked in their success, I am not wishing to decry the merits of such men as Bacon, who in his statues of Johnson and

Howard, in St. Paul's Cathedral, appears to me to have approached nearer to the pure dignity of the antique than any other modern sculptor. On the contrary, I would urge upon you attentive study of these figures, and set them before you as examples of what I have asserted in the early part of the lecture—viz., that as the Art rises in excellence, it partakes more and more of the pure simple feeling of the antique. Look at them as you like. You may differ from Bacon as to the propriety of investing them in antique drapery; and I think justly pronounce it anachronism, though much might be said in defence of even this. It must be allowed that it brings them into better keeping with the noble architectural frame in which they are enclosed; and the more than usually uncouth costume, in which the old Doctor himself was clothed in life, might be urged upon you as wholly beyond the power of treatment in Sculpture. You may look at them with all these objections on your mind; still you will not deny that they are fine as works of Art—far more so, at any rate, than many that have since been erected in the building, where correctness of dress has been more duly attended to.

These two statues serve in my mind to illustrate what I have said in my former lectures, that there is hardly a rule in Art that may not, on some occasion or other, be broken with advantage; that laws are laid down not to compel the student to a slavish obedience to them, but to give to the young the benefit derived from experience, and so sober and bring into rule and order that wild enthusiasm with which, if he be a real genius, he is generally imbued in early life. Here are two portrait statues that have set aside all correctness of costume, and yet it would be difficult to assert that they are not fine, and

still more difficult to feel that they would have been better if treated in a more literal manner. It is only fair, however, to say that they appear to me exceptional in their merit to the generality of Bacon's works; they have less of his affected ornamental flow of line, while they retain that careful study and finish so admirable in all he did. Though I have singled out three names as more particularly belonging to English Portrait Sculpture, I would not have you think me unmindful of Flaxman, even in this department of the Art: his statues of Nelson and Sir Joshua Reynolds, also in St. Paul's, are remarkable for their severity of style and sedateness of expression. The quantities are well arranged and balanced, and the expression appropriate in both. Nelson looks out upon England's foe with a calm yet severe determination, which assures us of victory and success; whilst Sir Joshua possesses much of that contemplative character appropriate to him as a great artist as well as a great writer on Art, coupled with that undisturbed repose of mind which belongs to the prudent man of the world. These statues will serve too as examples of how faithful treatment of costume may be united with severity of style, and they will well repay the contemplation of the sculptor student. Their limbs may not be so well shaped, nor the whole so highly finished, as in the before-mentioned ones by Bacon; but they are full of that quiet serenity which is the very essence of good Art, and which is so remarkable in everything that Flaxman wrought; and they have all that propriety of feeling which is the result of an experienced mind in contradistinction to that untrained energy that accompanies the efforts of youth. The figure of Nelson is remarkable for its severe simplicity, and the way the sculptor has shown his judgment by throwing the cloak



over the wanting arm, and so reconciled with history an Art which rebels against any defect of this kind, will serve as an answer to many a stupid joke made on the supposed difficulty thereby created. I wish I could say that we had more of Flaxman's portrait works in our this year's Exhibition, but the difficulty of moving these things has prevented it. We have, however, a fine example of him in the higher walk of Art, where he shows his power in composition—the Shield of Achilles—and two which belong to the subject I am now treating of, Portraiture, the statuettes of Raffaele and Michael Angelo. To these I would particularly call the student's attention. They are small in size, but perhaps no two works ever contained, sketches though they be, so much that is great in Art. They are, in fact, admirable instances of that quiet simplicity which should pervade all works of this kind; and this simplicity of expression is obtained without any loss in strength of character, or any sacrifice of faithfulness in costume. You may read the spirit of each of the two great men represented by them as clearly and distinctly as you would by the most careful study either of their history or of what they produced. I wish, in short, to recommend them most earnestly to the beginner in Sculpture as great works, as things that show him what he should aim at, to whatever department of his Art his efforts may be directed.

Unfortunately the collection contains this year, with hardly more than one exception besides these, little else than Heads, and this one exception, the statue of Her Majesty, is, I fear, not altogether a successful one. If I observe upon it, it is because I think it may serve as a warning to the student against that error of which I have already this evening spoken—

the total throwing aside of all costume of the period, and the adopting of that notion of classicality which is supposed to exist in antique drapery, and in an imitation of the style of bygone days. Looking at it as an ideal figure it may be good—I do not say that it is, or is not—but do we find anything in it that reminds us of our gracious Queen? The face may be like, but for that very reason is entirely out of keeping with the treatment of the other parts of the statue. As a portrait of Her Majesty, it is, I fear, almost worthless, and as an ideal statue it is, from its being to a certain degree a portrait, equally defective. These things when shown in our Exhibitions may serve as lessons to the students in two ways—how to advance, and what to avoid. Even the lines of the drapery have become, from their having been so constantly arranged after the same manner in antique works, almost conventional; they appear, in truth, from this circumstance to belong, and belong only, to the old period of Art, and the rigidity of treatment again carries the figure back to that date.

I will repeat you the words of Sir Joshua Reynolds on the treatment of portrait draperies, as I think they comprehend the entire argument of the question. They cannot, in fact, be too much kept in your minds. He says:—

“I cannot avoid mentioning here a circumstance in portrait painting which may help to confirm what has been said. When a portrait is painted in the historical style, as it is neither an exact minute representation of an individual nor completely ideal, every circumstance ought to correspond to this mixture. The simplicity of the antique air and attitude, however much to be admired, is ridiculous when joined to a figure in a modern dress. It is not to my purpose to enter into the question at

present, whether this mixed style ought to be adopted or not ; yet if it is chosen, it is necessary it should be complete and all of a piece : the difference of stuffs, for instance, which make the clothing, should be distinguished in the same degree as the head deviates from a general idea ; without this union, which I have so often recommended, a work can have no marked and determined character, which is the peculiar and constant evidence of genius. But when this is accomplished to a high degree, it becomes in some sort a rival to that style which we have fixed as the highest."

We have, however, collected together at this moment many portrait heads by which the learner may gain much, if he will but study them with care, and without any prejudice as to the comparative reputation of those who produced them. He may examine with advantage to himself the vigorous treatment, the sturdy truth in the head of Dr. Mead by Roubiliac, a head that renders Cromwell's directions to his portrait painter not so ridiculous as we are apt to suppose. He will find no softening off of the features there, but an honest acknowledgment of the peculiarities of face as a whole. He will recognize too the dignity of the lawyer Coke as well as the freedom with which the dress is treated in the grand head of him by the same sculptor, though I fear he will discover the absence, owing to its being posthumous, of that variety of surface, that difference between bone and flesh, always found in good works, whether portrait or ideal, when properly studied from Nature. I would have the student look to it with this idea, and he will see how mechanically the temple bones are given, how hard and inflexible the whole countenance is from this want, even when wrought by the hand of Roubiliac, who, of all modern portrait sculptors,

was the most famous for representing the undulations of the human face, and for giving that seeming power of movement which it has in reality. The bust is nobly conceived, most impressive as a whole ; but deficient in that subtle variety of surface which Roubiliac of all men would have given it had he had Nature before him as a guide.

You will expect me, I daresay, to refer next to Chantrey, another deservedly great name in Portrait Sculpture, the more so from my having in my earlier days been connected with his studio. But I am bound here to be no respecter of persons, and to speak the truth as far as I can, at whatever cost, for the benefit of the student.

Perhaps we have not been lucky enough to get the very finest examples of what this well-known sculptor produced. I doubt if we have, though there is much to praise in what is set before us, and much of which the student may take advantage. Be this as it may, I must tell you that I think the head next to those I have already named most worthy of your notice is that of Dr. Babington by Behnes. Not even Roubiliac's heads excel it in truthfulness to Nature, in that variety of touch, if I must use a painter's term, and in a certain characteristic expression which I feel sure belonged to the Doctor himself, so faithfully is it given. Let the student look at this again, and he may then turn to the before-mentioned Chantrey and make a comparison between the two. He will find in the latter, I fancy, a more refined, gentlemanly character, and a more profound expression—and this is no small praise—but I fear also he will find less mobility of parts and more mannerism in the treatment, especially of the hair. I am right, I believe, in saying that the expression of his faces is more profound ; but I think I am right

also in saying that he gave less diversity in that expression than did the other man, Behnes : in short, that he reduced his many sitters to one expression which belonged to himself, and which he imparted more or less to whatever or whomsoever came under his hand. This is a propensity we are all liable to, and one which there is considerable difficulty in avoiding; the best old sculptors have, however, steered clear of it. His draperies too, much as he was admired in his lifetime for them, seem to me hard and inflexible when put by the side of those of Roubiliac, who perhaps erred by a too loose treatment of them.

If I tell you this as my opinion, it is not that I wish you to be wholly guided by me, but to induce you to make comparisons for yourselves, when you get opportunities of doing so, as you have at the present moment in our Exhibition. This comparing the works of different men, and different periods, is one of the best lessons a student can possibly have. You need not always be looking at the antique: that, it is true, will show you in what true beauty of form consists; but you may learn much from what has been done in later days. Even when a man has failed in a certain point, you may learn from his failure to do otherwise. There is, in short, no better school for practical purposes than an Exhibition such as you have now the opportunity of studying, especially in Portraiture, which must so far always be a modern Art; or, at any rate, carry with it the appearance of one, since it must represent the day in which the work is wrought. I must content myself with these few observations on the display of this year, trusting that they may afford the means of further and better ones being made by the student himself; and will conclude my lecture of this evening by describing, as well as I can, what appears to me the best

practical method of carrying out a portrait bust—a method which will, I think, serve equally for a full-length figure. I wish you to understand, however, that I give it you not as having any claim to being the best, but merely as the one I use myself. I have, in fact, heard indirectly that a lady student has expressed a wish that I should do so ; and with this wish I feel myself bound to comply, leaving it to her to decide if it have or have not any value. It may possibly, I think, enable her to get over with more facility the preliminaries of her work, and so devote more patience and attention to the real essence of it—attitude, character, expression, and that harmony and propriety of treatment which renders every part in unison with the whole, while at the same time agreeable in itself.

When I start with a head from the life, my plan is first of all to make, as correctly as I can, a drawing on paper of the profile, attaching to it such measurements as will secure its being correct in size. Chantrey used Wollston's magnifying camera for this purpose, and so, perhaps, obtained more accuracy than by the eye alone. But the practice gained by the effort in drawing is worth more to the sculptor than any assistance of that kind, so that I do not recommend it. I then get on paper each feature in its place in respect to this view, the facial angle as it should be—a most important point in likeness—and I also make myself master of the size, hardly less important. I then proceed in the same manner with a drawing of the full face, attaching to it again measurements of the width of the head in various parts, of the ears, and as far as possible of the other features. You will tell me, perhaps, that this is a very roundabout way of beginning, and at the same time a very mechanical one ; the latter it certainly is, and I believe for

that reason the best ; but practice will, I fancy, show you that it is not the former. I then trace this outline profile on a thin board or veneer, and cut that board out so as to form by its edge a sort of mould by which I strike this outline on the clay built up for that purpose, after the manner of a plasterman, when he runs his mouldings along the margin of a room or otherwise. I then convey to the clay the various measurements I have made in both drawings, taking care that each feature assumes its relative place, but caring nothing as yet about expression or attitude—my only anxiety being, that the head should be perfectly upright, like a soldier's, that each half is equal in quantity, and that the angles at which the parts fall away from the centre are on both sides alike.

What have we obtained thus far? A mere block of clay, sometimes, but not always, indicating a gleam of likeness, but as yet almost without form and void. You would perhaps prefer rushing to expression, getting your head into attitude, grasping the character of your sitter, and so arriving at the end of your difficulties at once ; but you must recollect, that you have only as yet had about two hours of his time and company, and you will always be called upon for economy in that.

The cutting out of the profile, the building up of the clay, have all been done in his absence ; it is, in short, a preparation for the second interview : but little progress has apparently been made in the first one, but what you have done is correct as far as it goes. You have, in short, a groundwork which places you in ease and comfort for your second sitting—are, in fact, confident that what you have done is, as far as it goes, correct. The head is still stiff and formal in its position, but I need not again remind you that you are not as yet supposed to be well ac-

quainted with your sitter, and consequently not competent to decide the very important question of what is the most appropriate attitude—a question upon which much of likeness depends. But you will recollect, I am sure, that you have in Sculpture an advantage which the painter has not: the power of changing the position of the head, or even entire figure at any moment, without great detriment to what may have been done. Decapitation, by passing a fine wire or string through the throat, is a quiet, painless operation, as useful in our Art as it is in a more honourable one; twisting of the neck having generally a tendency rather to produce life than to extinguish it. You need not, however, be in a hurry about that, but wait until your model has attained more age and maturity. It is in your second sitting that the real work begins. You have then to arrange the principal depths and shadows of the face, and to give the projections their relative value and effect, recollecting that you have in many of them to compensate by increased strength for the want of colour in your Art. *Minutiæ* are as yet of no importance, if indeed they ever become so. You have too, while really giving your chief attention to your model, to appear to enter, as far as you can, into conversation with your sitter, so as to draw him out, and induce him to show himself in his natural habit and manner, for without this you will never truly know him as a portrait sculptor should, for he will ever more or less be under constraint, and be sailing under false colours, and you will consequently be unable to portray the inner man on the outer surface of your lump of clay. You may smile perhaps at my putting forth this as one of the difficulties in, and as one of the modes of getting a good likeness; but it is nevertheless part and parcel of them, and there are many



questions involved in it which I need not go into here, such as the necessity for good education among artists, and for a general knowledge of the world among them. Unless you can accomplish this double kind of task that is imposed upon you, you will have little chance of obtaining what may be termed a characteristic resemblance. You have to feel, really feel, an interest in the remarks of your sitter, to enter into the gist of his conversation ; in short, to lead him on unconsciously to those subjects about which his mind has been most engaged or his energies most exercised. He comes, you must recollect, to your studio generally with a prejudice against sitting as a tedious process, and if you can while away the hour so as to make him forget what he is about, he will be agreeably surprised, and be more likely to recommend others to undergo the same. You will readily believe me when I say that I myself find this necessity of making myself agreeable on such occasions one of the most difficult portions of my labour, and it is for that reason that I impress the importance of it in my lecture.

It may not, however, be so with you—with some of my audience I am sure, in fact, that it is not. While your sitter is with you, you need not at any time attend to what is called the finishing of your head or figure. Make, if I may use the term, memoranda on it while he is with you ; they may be roughly done, but they will serve your memory when he is gone, and when you are occupying yourself by smoothing the surface, by toning down the too strong markings, and by getting the whole well together. You will thus find yourself well prepared for a further interview when the process has to be repeated, and so on *ad infinitum*.

A few more remarks, and I have done. A dark complexion, black hair, and a rich tone of colour, require deep cuttings and

strong shadows, while the absence of these qualities necessitates fainter treatment and greater breadth of parts. A stout, heavy figure will bear heavy drapery, if drapery be used at all, while a thin light one calls for smaller and more delicate folds from the same necessity for harmony as a whole. I am not certain indeed if Roubiliac has not somewhat sinned by departure from this rule in his splendid head of Dr. Mead; but he was addicted to meagreness, was in the habit, it is said, and I am inclined to believe, of casting real wet drapery on his models, by which, though a certain amount of fact is obtained, a certain amount of meagreness becomes almost inevitable. I will forgive him this error, however, if his fiery spirit will forgive me the remark I have made until I shall have modelled as fine a head as the one I allude to.





LECTURE X.

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS. No. I.



THE celebrated discourses of Sir Joshua Reynolds, delivered now a century back, may, without any great impropriety, be termed the Classics of English Art Literature. Though written more expressly for Painting, there is much in them that is equally applicable to all the professions, or, in other words, as useful to the sculptor and architect as to the painter. They are now presented, in fact, annually to medallist students in each department of Art. A member of our Academy once said that he believed if our professors would but read a portion of these discourses from time to time to the students, it would benefit them as much as, or even more than their own lectures. I am by no means certain he was wrong. At any rate, it would be a godsend to the lecturers themselves; for it would save them a deal of time, and perhaps in some instances a world of thought; and the Academy might elect them after the manner of Sir Roger de Coverley, who, when he wished to appoint his chaplain, asked, not for a man of any particular theological knowledge, or power of literary composition, but simply for



STATUE OF THE MARQUIS OF WELLESLEY.

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one who possessed a good clear voice that would make itself heard among his congregation.

I have no authority, however, for taking to myself this pleasant, though somewhat idle view of my duties, so shall content myself on this occasion with reading parts of what Sir Joshua says, and with making my comments on those parts as I go on, more especially on those—and they are many—which appertain to the branch of Art I am here to teach. I shall thus, like other great rogues, be keeping within the letter of the law, while I shall appropriate to myself much that is valuable, and of which you will be, without any evil consequences to yourselves I trust, the receivers.

Before beginning, allow me a moment to bring the great man himself before you. I shall endeavour to do so because I think that from a study of the man, good may be obtained, as well as from a study of his works; and that a careful consideration of his character may lead the student to understand the primary cause from which the great ends accomplished in him were derived, and serve to show how, by imitating his method in life, the like success may be obtained by the like means; always supposing that the student possesses the like, or equal genius, or in other words the same innate ideas. With innate faculties, a lecturer has little or nothing to do, since they cannot be created by advice, nor indeed by any other mode of tuition. They are, or are not, within us from the beginning; but though they must pre-exist as a foundation for what hereafter has to be built upon them, whether in Art or in morals, they may be improved or enlarged by cultivation, and made to bear greater fruit by care and attention. This, I hope to show to you, was the case with Reynolds. Born, no doubt, with a natural capacity

beyond that of most men, he made that capacity effective by a strict adhesion to those principles of truth he wrought out for himself by the reasoning power within him. He lived, worked, regulated his time and conduct by rule ; looking steadily and undeviatingly to that ultimate result which he calculated would arise, and with him did arise, from the plan he had laid down in the beginning. Whether he wrote, spoke, painted, or took part in general affairs, there was a constant bearing, either direct or indirect, in all he did on what he conceived to be, as far as this world is concerned, the chief purport of his life ; and hence it was that all his efforts, his thoughts, words, and deeds, became united as an army, and charged with combined force and energy on the one position he had resolved to take—that of becoming a great painter, who should hand down to posterity a high reputation in Art. A lesser faculty than his would not, under the same circumstances, accomplish what he did ; but I may say that, cultivated under the same regular system, and governed by the same immutable laws, it would attain a strength that would surpass that of many a man possessing greater original genius, but wanting in his dogged perseverance and steadfast power of looking to one point.

Genius and talent are undoubtedly, whether in the Arts or in other things, terms that have distinct and different meanings. The one, genius, is that creative power, that innate faculty of which I have already spoken, and which forms, in my opinion, one of the strongest existing evidences in favour of the doctrine of an immaterial and independent power acting upon a material body to a certain extent subservient to it, but which, by its propensities, often tends to counteract the purposes of the former, and render the accomplishment of them incomplete :

the other is that secondary power, which, by acting in concert with the greater one, helps to thoroughly develop its effect, but which is in itself more a matter of education and gradual attainment. It is improved by what it finds itself thrown amongst, grows with what is around it, and constitutes in consequence the harvest that is gathered in by academies and other institutions connected with progress.

We attain talent in the Arts in after-life by the same means as we acquire the power of language in our childhood—by imitation of our elders, by copying of the old masters and mistresses that have gone before us ; but we cannot imbue ourselves with genius, though it may be said that genius and talent are frequently so intermingled one with another—run often so close together—that it is very difficult to judge of how much belongs to one and how much to the other. The lesser one, talent, however, seems to me to have in the Arts this advantage, that it helps progress more by leaving behind it that which can be more easily conveyed one to another and handed down from generation to generation, than does the greater one, which advances only the happy possessor of it—often tends, in fact, to stay for a time the advancement that would otherwise have gone on but for the diversion from the right course which it almost invariably causes. Reynolds had both genius and talent, and hence his greatness. Could I really call him up to sight at this moment, you would find in him, probably, nothing very striking, for his figure was in no way commanding, nor, as I fancy, was his face remarkable ; but I think you would recognize in him as he stood before you, dressed in his velvet coat and breeches, with his powdered head, and his silver knee and shoe-buckles, a gentleman, perhaps a little out of date now, but still a gentle-



man of his day, with none of those ugly eccentricities which made their appearance among us so frequently in the early days of Art, but accustomed to the very best society, and acquainted with all the polite urbanities of highly civilized life. You would feel that he was one who entered into that society by a right that was within himself, and not by the patronizing permission of those who were born more immediately within it; and I think I might safely leave in your hands, while he stood before you, the question of how much of the elegant propriety that is found in his works emanated from the original refinement and natural dignity of the man himself.

What is it that imparts to him such size and importance? what is it that gives him such vast dimensions now that we look at him through the hazy atmosphere of a hundred years? Few now seem equal to him. Gainsborough is one that comes near to him in importance: as for the rest, Reynolds appears like a giant stalking among the pigmies of his day. How is this? Hogarth had departed this life, and none had risen to fill his place. Reynolds's paintings shine like suns among the minor constellations that were around him, and that followed in his track; and this is enough to account for his greatness. But it is not all. He was a man of education, not perhaps of much school education, but self-taught; for his father, though a clergyman, is said to have been neglectful of his children.

Sir Joshua Reynolds was one that looked to a wider sphere than that of mere Art, and gathered knowledge of all kinds as a bee gathers honey, everywhere in his path, and from all around. A man of thought in more ways than on canvas, and the companion of thinking men, among many who had in them nothing but their Art, and very little thought even in that, he

was in himself an example both of the aid which academies give to Art and of the limit by which that aid is circumscribed. That they cannot create genius, did not in his case, is certain. The appropriate expression of his portraits, the elegance and variety of their attitudes and arrangements were his own, emanating from the inward dignity and mental refinement of the man, a refinement cultivated and improved by intercourse with others of like, if not of superior capacity. These were the idiosyncrasies that were born within him before academies were founded here, or at any rate before anything like good teaching existed; but the means of expressing those idiosyncrasies by drawing, not then of a very powerful kind, by contrast of light and shade, and by colour, he learned from the schools of Art, or, what is the same thing, from that general school he taught himself in, by his study in Italy and other countries where Art of a previous date had flourished.

That he was eminently practical you will be convinced when you recollect that in his travels he contented himself with making, by a few lines and smudges, memoranda of the works that most caught his admiration, without stopping positively to copy anyone of them, and that he neglected no lesson which could be learnt from his predecessors in Art of any age or country. You will be certain of this if you call to mind that when he returned from his travels his style was found to be so changed, so much broader, so much more grand and effective, that it inspired the jealousy of his master, Hudson, to say that he painted worse than when he started.

With all the good that academies do—and no man can afford to neglect them—with all their good, I say, they have a tendency to tone down, if not do away entirely with those peculiarities

of thought that mark the genius of the man, and serve to distinguish him hereafter in the history of his profession. In the case of Reynolds the individuality was of too powerful a kind to be annihilated by the training of schools; but in a weaker temperament the effect might have been to absorb the individual in that uniformity of manner they are apt to inculcate. The student has, then, whether painter or sculptor, to ascertain by communing with himself what are the characteristics of mind he most strongly possesses, and how far those characteristics are suitable to his Art. Having settled these questions, and especially the latter, he has to take care that, while undergoing the education applied to him in his studies, he lose none of that freshness which, if of the right kind, ought to be as conspicuously displayed in his works when he leaves as when he enters the academy; and in aid of this he should be careful not to attach himself in manner to that of any particular artist, nor, indeed, of any particular school. If he do this his future productions will possess originality and knowledge, and both are necessary in Sculpture as well as in Painting. Neither need interfere with the other; on the contrary, if properly applied, the latter will tend to aid and support the former and to make it effective.

It is difficult, now that we are surrounded on all sides by the means of instruction, by schools, by museums of ancient Sculpture, and galleries of Old Masters, and now that we have regularly our annual exhibitions, which, as opportunities of comparing ourselves one with another, form in my mind one of the most powerful means of advancement—it is difficult, I say, to conjure up in one's imagination the paucity of these things in the time of our first president, and more particularly in his

early days, and the consequent slow progress that Art then made, whether in Painting or Sculpture. The former had almost everything to learn, with scarcely any means at hand to learn from—for examples of the Old Masters were but little seen in England, and when seen were, through neglectful prejudice, but little valued or respected: while the latter, Sculpture, had, what is worse, to unlearn the impurity of style and those florid absurdities that had sprung up in the reigns of the early Georges and still earlier Stuarts; a task which took her a long time to accomplish, for it was not until much after the date we are now speaking of that she entirely got rid of them. When Reynolds was born there was no Academy of Arts in this country—each man had to struggle on in his profession as best he could by himself; and at the time when the Chair of our Institution was first taken, there existed only two small associations of artists, few of whose names are now even remembered, and who appear to have been engaged more with their petty personal jealousies than with any real desire to advance Art. Previously, and even after our Academy had emerged from this turmoil of temper, the public exhibitions consisted of works the majority of which were of a character so weak as hardly to be believed in now.

Portraiture constituted their main feature, as may be seen by the catalogues that still remain to us; and this portraiture of the feeblest, most emasculated kind, as is shown by some few works that have preserved their vitality from their representing persons of note or interest. Reynolds, like most eminent men, has suffered from invidious biographers—from the envy of those who, because they did not shine as he did, have tried to pull him down to their own standard. Cunningham imputes to him

as characteristic things of which there is no proof: unable to perceive the strict principles practised by Reynolds all through his industrious life, he accuses him of an inordinate love of money in his professional transactions, and hard dealings in his domestic establishment, taking as evidence of the latter the grumble of a discontented servant, and of the former the circumstance that Sir Joshua died rich, while he was the companion of men of like, but not superior intellect, with pockets less furnished, though with brains equally full. Detractors are good sportsmen, for they always aim at birds that are the highest on the wing, and in one instance they wounded him deeply, for they drew forth from him a cry of pain and indignation when they imputed to others the merits of the very writings of which I am speaking. This, again, Cunningham repeats, giving to those who sat at Sir Joshua's table and partook of his hospitality credit for the good these writings contain, and even hinting at motives for entertaining his guests unworthy of the poorest artist, and still more so of the greatest portrait-painter England has produced. Reynolds was no courtier, in the worst sense of the word: his manners were gentle and even engaging, but he neither pandered to the aristocracy for gain nor lost his self-respect for the sake of their favour; on the contrary, he preferred the society of, and gathered round him men of mind who were poor, and who may almost be said to have hung about his house as to a home which they could scarcely find elsewhere. Even Johnson was poor, as well he might be with his surly independence in that age of sycophancy, for he had to ask on his death-bed of Reynolds forgiveness of a debt of thirty pounds; and what poor Goldie was we all know. Shall we call the President mean after this?

These men, though eminent in literature, did not sell themselves for a dinner, or make returns for what they ate by puffs in the public papers; they were too noble for that: besides, it was not the fashion in those days, and Reynolds had no need of them in that way, for his genius drew the world after him without it. No; what he lent to Johnson and what he may have given to Goldsmith came from a good heart, from a strong sympathy and a noble motive. That he died richer than they did may be ascribed to many reasons: his Art was more called for than theirs, and his productive power was more continuous as well as more energetic.

Cunningham seems, as any one can perceive who will read his biographies, and more particularly that of Reynolds, anxious to raise Literature at the expense of Art; in which course I need not tell you I am not desirous to follow him: both can live and prosper without interfering with each other. The truth is, that Cunningham drew the facts he had to deal with in the life of Reynolds from the works of other biographers, but the sneers were strictly his own.

Reynolds's detractors were incapable of understanding the practical philosophy that ran through his life and works, a philosophy resembling more that of Aristotle than of Plato; for he built up no broad, almost Utopian theories, indulged in no indistinct visionary ideas of excellence, more sound in theory than in practice, but looked rather at such plain facts as were before him, and drew from them, in the simplest possible manner, results as they applied to himself alone. He seems to have adopted the idea of the first-named Greek philosopher, Aristotle, that virtue, or if you do not like the term, excellence lies in a medium between excesses of all kinds; that the *juste*

*milieu* is the spot where stands all that is true and permanent in life, and, I think I may add without fear, in Art. The world bestows, perhaps, but little praise on character of this kind; it is lavish in its commendation of extravagant generosity, and imparts its sympathy and pity to it, even when that generosity has led to unfortunate results with its possessor; but it denies the good that may be in that just balance of the mind which induces a man to be moderate, and to guide himself in all he does by certain rules he has laid down as the best for all, himself included. It applies the words mean, selfish, narrow-minded to that which is after all, perhaps, only proper prudence and well-regulated reserve, and ignores all else because the effects are not so immediately visible to the eye. That Reynolds understood the sentence, "Do unto others as you would they should do unto you," which constitutes the great difference between the Christian and the old Greek philosophy, or that he practised it on a larger, broader scale than others, it is not for me to say. I am not here to judge him in that sense, though I may feel inclined to defend him from the accusations he has undergone from the want of that ostentatious extravagance which is so popular with an unthinking public. With these questions I have nothing to do: my object is merely to show you, with a clear outline and in his right colours, the man who most succeeded in his Art, who laid out the talent with which he was intrusted, and drew from it the highest possible advantage and profit; such an one, in my opinion, was Sir Joshua Reynolds.

The same plain looking at facts appears to me to be illustrated in his works as in his life. There is no centre of Idealism running through them that seems to make them all more or

less alike, or converge to one central point. That he looked upon Nature with a loving eye, and drew beauty from everything that he imitated, is certain; but then it was simply by preserving in his representations the beauty that existed in his original, and by omitting all that did not tend to aid that beauty, that he accomplished this, and produced what appears even more beautiful than Nature herself: he saw through the rough outer surface of the diamond, and removed it in his Art so as to show the brightness beneath, but he did not change its nature.

His portraits were a sifting-out of the beauty that was before him when he was painting; not any abstract or preconceived ideality within himself which he endeavoured to impart to his sitter. There is no centre of beauty that can be attained by the study of Reynolds's portraits: they are each separate in themselves, and in consequence have altogether that infinite variety which exists in Nature, and which, after all, is more charming than any one set of form or feature, which, however true to rule or regular in its proportions, can but become monotonous and pall upon the eye when too often repeated. They represent no particular type of beauty, but simply that beauty which existed at the moment before him clothed in the garments of the generation to which it belonged, a generation he may be said to have made famous for its beauty by the means I have here hinted at—that of hiding or throwing aside all that did not properly belong to the beautiful in it.

You will say to me, perhaps, that as a portrait-painter it could not be otherwise; that he had likeness and character to give, and that this is the cause of that variety of which I have spoken. But if you look back at any inferior men, either before



or after him, you will find that they often lost that variety, that truthfulness to Nature, by attempts at reducing everything to a rule which they had laid down for themselves before their sitters entered their studio. It was so with many of the portrait-painters of Reynolds's day, and it grew afterwards to an excess which was sickening in the poetical and historical works of Westall, and entirely destroyed in them that affinity to Nature which is the sustaining prop in all good works of Art. We have had the same strong propensity to reduce everything to a pre-arranged type in our modern Roman Sculptors : with them, busts, and I may say figures, have become all alike, from the notion that there was one form or treatment that was thought applicable to everything for the very curious reason that it belonged to nothing in particular. You will say that there was but little beauty in them, if any, so that this could not arise from any centralization of that quality ; but it is in one respect the same thing : it is the evil of what is called a school, where everything is made to pass through a sort of mechanical press, and come out with the same pattern marked upon it. Gibson, with all his talent, was, in some instances, a victim to this disease : you recognize with him, not the individual represented, but the individual who executed the work, by certain peculiarities, which have no connection whatever with the original, nor even with his time—on the contrary, were gathered by a blind love and fanatic admiration of things appertaining to other ages and other countries. Not so with Reynolds—and what I say of him will be found equally applicable to Sculpture as to Painting—he had nothing at the moment in his mind's eye but his sitter ; he endeavoured to understand the individuality of that sitter, whether man, woman, or child ; to enter

deeply and sympathetically into his or her mode of thinking, peculiarity of action, and expression. He thought of nothing but that sitter ; became himself, in imagination, as far as was in his power, that sitter ; and made his Art the servant of what was before him, to perpetuate all that ought to be perpetuated, but, like a good servant, to be silent or blind to all such things as it were best the world should not know or hear of. By these means he made loveliness more lovely, and even ugliness attractive ; and as for infantine grace and simplicity, he handed that down to us as no other artist, either before or since, has done : and this alone will serve to rebuke the many aspersions that have been cast against him, for to do this he must have been himself in heart a child, though in mind a man.

I may here say to the young student in Sculpture that the same feeling I have just endeavoured to advocate may be of equal service to him in ideal Art as in portraiture. His efforts at conception should be directed at once to the character he wishes to represent, or to the event he is anxious to portray. I would have him cast aside all recollection of what has been done before, and even to think slightly in the first instance of what has been laid down for his guidance in Art. He will thus retain that rare quality, originality, in what he does ; and the necessities of his Art will, later in the work, if he be but wise and submissive, bring him sufficiently back to what I may call its regulations, and create as strict an obedience as is advisable to the rules by which, in spite of himself, he will feel himself controlled.

I must, before quoting to you in detail the great Leader, make some remarks of a general nature on his discourses. I have called them the classics of English Art Literature ; they

are entitled to the expression in two ways: they are not only among the earliest English productions in which anything like principles are laid down to guide the student, but those principles, as in most early works, are set forth in a very broad, general manner. They go but little, if at all, into details; but merely lay down such rules as are applicable to every branch of Art. These principles will serve well for the foundation of any train of thought the reader may be capable of building upon them, but they go no further: the mental structure which they may have to support must be shaped by the architect who erects it, according to his own design and taste; and for this reason alone I may advise the beginner, whether painter or sculptor, the reading them carefully and studying them well, as he will thus obtain for himself something to build upon which will prevent him ever going far astray from what is right and from what is suitable to his purpose, without in the least cramping the genius or talent that may be within him. That Reynolds could not have gone further, I do not for a moment venture to say. It should be remembered that each of these discourses had to be delivered within a very short space of time—scarcely a third of that I shall have to occupy this evening—and that they were for this reason necessarily condensed: this, I am certain, will recommend them to your notice. There is one accusation made among many others against Reynolds from which I here feel bound to defend him. He is said to have preached, in these discourses, the grand style of Art, whilst at home he practised a style totally different—a style he himself condemned to an inferior grade under the title of the ornamental or enticing; and that of this, the more lucrative branch, in which he so excelled, he gave no insight either by

what he said or by what he wrote. Is this just? With regard to the first part: every man, I maintain, whether a president delivering his essay at the distribution of medals, or a lecturer speaking to the students in his usual course for their instruction, is bound, when in the Academy, to advocate the highest style only of his calling, whatever may be the particular branch to which he may devote himself at home; for this higher style contains in the greatest degree all those principles which constitute it as the highest, and which spread themselves more or less abundantly through the lower ones, linking them all to it by a tie that entitles them to their share in the words *Fine Art*.

An academy is, or ought to be, a fortress held by Art to defend itself from those prejudicial attacks made by the bad taste and uncertain waverings of the outside public upon it. It should lead that taste when it is right, and repel it when it is wrong; not surrender itself to every momentary fashion that may happen to prevail. That Reynolds was inconsistent in his practice, I deny; that he discovered within himself, by a sort of intuitive feeling, the walk of Art most suitable to his powers may be true—we all do that, sooner or later in life, I have just advised the student to do the same; but much of the beauty which Reynolds imparted to that walk is derived from the higher one he advocated in his discourses. It is indeed, I believe, owing to the presence of what is derived from it that we so admire his productions. Breadth, simplicity of treatment, due subordination of parts, all, in fact, is contained within them that belongs to academic teaching, or is the result of experience in Art; but it is there without in the least interfering with that faithful representation of truth—I do not like to use the word *fact*—necessary to his purpose. They wear the livery of, and are subservient

to his walk of Art, but, while attending upon it, attempt in no way to rule or subvert it from its proper course, though they may appear to form part of its outward dignity and importance. Reynolds could point out, and to a certain extent explain these higher and more general qualifications to the students, but could not teach them portraiture : it was not his object to do so, as he could not imagine that all his hearers were to follow that one calling ; though, if we look back to his period, we might find even excuse for such an absurdity. Where, then, was his inconsistency ? I confess I do not see it. Did he differ in this respect from our other presidents ? West attempted a loftier flight, or rather, perhaps, a higher walk ; but from want of power, it may be from a want of academic education, comparatively failed. Had he studied the style Reynolds preached and practised, it might have saved him from that mannerism which has been so fatal to him. Was Lawrence more consistent ? did his works belong more to the grand style ? and yet he taught, when addressing the student, the same doctrine, and even made at home a collection of Michael Angelo's drawings, showing that he admired and felt the dignity of that class of Art, so much above and at the same time so different from his own. Was Shée any better in this respect ? and yet he was one of the brightest scholars that ever filled the president's chair, not excepting even our late much lamented one, Sir Charles Eastlake, whose writings have done more service, not only to Art, but to Art of the highest kind, than those of any man within our memory. Let us not squabble about consistency or inconsistency, but take what is offered to us and be thankful.

On Reynolds's first discourse, delivered on the opening of the Royal Academy, in January, 1769, I have but little to observe.

Days of self-laudation and of hopes since found, by long experience, more difficult to fulfil than to express, are long gone by. We have thrown away our cocked hats, doffed our other habiliments of State and ceremony, and put on our working dresses. We no longer see our president in the chair on occasions like the present ; and I don't know that we are e'er the worse for it. All these things have passed away, and may be reckoned among the departed. The morning dreams of Art have vanished, and after all the speculations we have entered into, with our sleeping eyes, there stands before us in broad daylight but two truths—that Life is short and Art long, and that to be really great we must labour hard. Many obstacles have arisen since Reynolds delivered his first discourse, or since he slept with his forefathers, which he probably never anticipated would impede progress : some of them bearing on Painting, and some on Sculpture, and some even on both Arts. For instance, a tendency to imitate the weaknesses of more primitive days and to negative all that has been learnt from the long experience of more advanced times. Then, again, the propensity to amalgamate the styles of the two Arts, Painting and Sculpture, which ought in both to be separate. When Reynolds was thus speaking to the students of the Academy, Sculpture in this country was endeavouring to free herself from those shackles which her sister, Painting, as the more popular Art, had thrown over her, and striving to attain that purity of form and severity of treatment which more properly belong to her.

In the more recent days of Flaxman she accomplished this, though at the sacrifice of some beauties of execution ; yet I am sorry to say that now, a century later, I perceive a return to the error, and that the falling back is not only encouraged by the

public taste, but even advocated by those who, if they would but for a moment look out of their studios, might possibly take in a broader, more extensive horizon of the Arts. Yet even in Reynolds's first address there is much left to us that is valuable. He impresses upon the student the necessity of care, rather than of attempt at facility in execution. He speaks too of the advantage of his working in company with his equals, and says that it is from them only that he catches the fire of emulation. He advocates the benefit of a public Academy of Fine Arts being established in a country, and compares it with the drawbacks in Italy at the time of Raphael and Michael Angelo, when no such thing existed, and when the pupil had to depend on private tuition for his progress. I doubt, however, if Reynolds is quite right on this point—right, I mean, in making the comparison, and I might put forth the height to which both Painting and Sculpture reached at that period as proof to the contrary. But the fact is, the system at that time combined the advantages that belong to both private tuition and public academies. The master had many scholars at the same moment, so that they learned, not only from what their teacher said and did, but also from what they saw their fellow pupils doing around them.

I have not as yet made many quotations, so will venture to give you one which appears rather too appropriate to the present moment, seems somehow to touch our conscience rather sharply. Speaking in congratulatory terms of the first opening of the Royal Academy, Reynolds says: "An Institution like this has often been recommended upon considerations merely mercantile, but an Academy founded on such principles can never effect even its own narrow purposes." I do not know whether I am over thin-skinned, but it seems to me that if we

substitute the words "our Art" for Academy—and in one sense they are the same—it is hitting us hard just now. In short, that some of us are selling for money labour and industry that should go to our credit at the banking-house of Fame and Co.; that, by bending to the popular feeling of the instant, we are parting with the safe securities of our profession for speculative investments, which may bring higher interest for the moment, but which will break down after a while, and leave us minus our capital—sound belief in and strict adhesion to the permanent principles in our Art. We will let that pass, however, though I can hardly do so with another exceedingly bad habit which seems to me to prevail not only in Sir Joshua's first, but more or less in all his discourses—a proneness to lecture the professors themselves. That they should have required teaching is quite out of the question, and I am sure you will agree with me that Sir Joshua's lectures even in this respect are useless, if not worse than useless; for it is not by fruitless endeavours to bend into proper shape and arrangement the fixed ideas of the old, so hardened and barked over by age, that they will bend in no way to circumstances, that Art is pushed forward. Pruning and lopping off branches so as to reduce them within proper bounds is the only process of service with them. It is not by these means, I say, that Art is advanced, but by nursing and training in the right direction the sprouting ideas of the young, who have to carry on its ramifications through forthcoming times, and upon whose support it must at a future day depend. The only excuse I can possibly make for our president's presumption, or, to use a mild term, uncalled-for cruelty, in lecturing the masters, is that he may have fancied that his co-members and teachers were as ignorant of the theory of their



Art as were the students themselves, if not more so. Too many years have passed over for us to judge how far this idea was or was not correct.

We next come to a paragraph of the highest value, not only in itself intrinsically, but as having the authority of so great a master. It will be found, I think, of like benefit to the sculptor as to the painter, perhaps more so, as it refers to the ancient examples set up in our schools, nearly all of which belong to the sculptor's branch of Art; and I would strongly recommend it to the notice of the students, because, with my usual ill-natured feeling, I fancy they show at this moment a tendency to err in the opposite direction, to set up their well-meant but crude and ill-digested judgment against the verdict which time has set upon these works. Perhaps I am wrong—I hope I am—but there is certainly a tendency just now to abandon those standards of excellence around which it was formerly thought best to rally. There I go again. Let me quote the passage at once before I get into further mischief. Reynolds says: "I would chiefly recommend that an implicit obedience to the rules of Art, as established by the practice of the great masters, should be exacted from the young students. That those models which have passed through the approbation of ages should be considered by them as perfect and infallible guides: as subjects for their imitation, not their criticism. I am confident that this is the only efficacious method of making a progress in the Arts; and that he who sets out with doubting will find life finished before he becomes master of the rudiments. For it may be laid down as a maxim, that he who begins by presuming on his own sense, has ended his studies as soon as he has commenced them. Every opportunity, therefore, should be taken

to discountenance that false and vulgar opinion, that rules are the fetters of genius. They are fetters only to men of no genius: as that armour which upon the strong is an ornament and a defence, upon the weak and misshapen becomes a load, and cripples the body which it was made to protect."

That this is sound doctrine no one can, I think, doubt, though it may seem at first sight to inculcate a subservience of thought, irksome and difficult to submit to in the young mind; but it is simply a beginning at the right end and a deferring of questions which do not exactly concern the student at the beginning of his career, to days of more experience and more deliberate judgment. He proceeds in fact, soon afterwards, in the following words: "How much liberty may be taken to break through those rules, and, as the poet expresses it,

"'To snatch a grace beyond the reach of Art,'

may be a subsequent consideration, when the pupils become masters themselves. It is then, when their genius has received its utmost improvement, that rules may be dispensed with. But let us not destroy the scaffold until we have raised the building." Young men are ardent, sincere in what they think, and in what they say; they have held their opinions honestly but unquestioned, even by themselves, from the first moment when they began to think, but they have never undergone change. We old men know how often we have felt obliged to relinquish reluctantly our early opinions, and how few of them have been found to stand the test of careful analyzation.

Whether an established law is based on sound principles or is merely a long revered ancient prejudice, as many of them are, will be better ascertained when you have gained the requisite experience. I would say to you in the words of the

great Napoleon to the raw recruit who was eager to advance, "Wait until you have fought a hundred battles." In your case they must be battles of the mind, not easy and uninterrupted marches from one point to another of an argument.

There is one sentence in what I have just quoted that appears to me so pithy and condensed, as well as so truthful, that I will, even at the hazard of wearying you, give it once more, and so finish my remarks on this part of the first discourse. It is this : "He who sets out with doubting will find life finished before he becomes master of the rudiments. For it may be laid down as a maxim, that he who begins by presuming on his own sense, has ended his studies as soon as he has commenced them."





## LECTURE XI.

### SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS. No. II.



YOU may perhaps imagine that my occupying you by a second lecture on Reynolds's discourses is a wasting of your time, which might be better employed. You may tell me that you have already read them, and many other books of a like kind, without gaining much practical advantage in your professional pursuits. Such may possibly in some instances be the case; for among the few students who are readers in what appertains to their Art, fewer still are, I fear, great *thinkers* on what they read.

More attention is paid in our schools to dexterity of the hand and practice of the eye than to the cultivation of the mental faculties, and the enlargement of the scope over which those faculties are to range. Witness the almost entire absence of visitors to our library, where so many fine works are stored that serve to explain the principles of the different professions; and witness again the want of meaning or purport in many works in our annual exhibitions, which are, as far as execution is concerned, admirable. We have, according to my idea, made far greater advances in the shaping of the letters of our Art than

in the thought those letters are intended to express. We read and hear of many works among the ancients, crude and primitive in execution, yet suggestive of beautiful and even sublime ideas ; while the contrary is, I fear, often—I do not say always—the case with us. We have careful finish, elaborate execution of parts, but seldom much meaning or intention in the whole. Almost the only sculptor among us who is an exception to this censorious criticism is Flaxman. His execution was, at any rate in the latter part of his life, negligent ; the modelling of the parts in his figures can scarcely be put before you as examples of excellence. They are, in fact—I say it with regret—deficient in correctness, or at all events in proper finish ; but the sublime sentiment, the grand purport, the appropriate arrangement, and the well expressed intention of the whole make you forget his defects in modelling and the incompleteness of much that he sent forth. He was a man of much reading, was scarcely ever without a book in his hand when not engaged with the pencil or modelling-tool ; had searched far back into the old Greek and Latin writers ; and had dived deeply into the ancient poets, where conceptions are to be found suitable to an Art which deals only with the most serious and lofty subjects. He loved, I believe, the book I am now recommending to your more earnest study as well as the man who wrote it. I do not mean, in reminding you of this, to tell you that theoretical knowledge alone will enable you to work in the same spirit as he did. It is a different thing altogether. To do as Flaxman did you must be Flaxmans yourselves in other ways than that ; but it will help you to do so by leading you to distinguish in your Art what is of the first value from what is of minor importance. Nor am I advocating neglect of the schools

where the more practical part of our Art is taught, but merely an increased attention to the higher portions ; though a quotation I shall give from the author now under our consideration might possibly be construed as encouraging such neglect. His intention however is, as you will perceive, merely to discourage the servile copying of individual models, and that lazy habit of unthinking labour which arises from the student resorting to no other mental exertion than is required in reproducing what is placed before him. Before giving you his words, it may be as well you should know that I intend, whenever I may have occasion to quote from him, to substitute, at my own pleasure, the terms modelling and sculpture for those of drawing or painting ; as I can scarcely be said in so doing to be perverting his meaning, but merely to be giving it a wider range.

I will venture, in fact, to assert that were he actually at this moment in the place occupied by our worthy Chairman, he would raise no objection to such use being made of his language. He would not indeed, I believe, even trouble himself to lower his ear-trumpet, as was his habit when Barry began to vomit forth his abusive innuendoes. Now let him speak for himself. He says : " Some who have never raised their minds to the consideration of the real dignity of the Art, and who rate the works of an artist in proportion as they excel or are defective in the mechanical parts, look on theory as something that may enable them to talk, but not to paint better ; and confining themselves entirely to mechanical practice, very assiduously toil on in the drudgery of copying, and think they make a rapid progress while they faithfully exhibit the minutest part of a favourite model. This appears to me a very tedious, and, I think, a very erroneous method of proceeding. Of every large composition,

even of those which are most admired, a great part may be truly said to be commonplace. This, though it takes up much time in copying, conduces little to improvement. I consider general copying as a delusive kind of industry. The student satisfies himself with the appearance of doing something. He falls into the dangerous habit of imitating without selecting, and of labouring without any determinate object. As it requires no effort of the mind, he sleeps over his work. And those powers of invention and composition which ought particularly to be called out, and put in action, lie torpid, and lose their energy for want of exercise."

You have probably read in Dickens's "*A Tale of Two Cities*," the description of the man who, by long solitary confinement in the Bastille, had lost from want of exercise, from lack of all communication with other people, almost every faculty of his mind. An artist who works silently by himself without an interchange of ideas with other men, without reading or otherwise attaining a comparison of himself with others, falls almost into the same helpless condition. He may make shoes in order to prevent his mind becoming a complete blank, as is said to have done the poor man just alluded to, or he may model figures; but it will be in his case, as in the other, a mere monotonous, mechanical labour; without variety, without progress: serving well enough to fill up time, but tending to produce nothing that has not been done, and in all probability better done before. You may plead to me that it is best to be practical; by which I will presume you to mean that it is best always to be with your modelling-tool or chisel in hand, and there can be no doubt that this is the chief thing to be attended to; but there is a theory as well as a practice.

I will quote to you a sentence attributed to Disraeli, which may be worth your consideration, one of those sayings that come under the denomination of proverbs—wisdom condensed. He says : “ The practical man is content to practise the blunders of his predecessors.” You may do this yourself, you may copy the right and the wrong without knowing the difference, or at any rate without being able to give a reason for the difference between the two, but to become masters you must consult the opinions of others—try and understand the writings and sayings of those who have gone before you, and especially those who, like Reynolds, have shown a broad principle running through all they did.

Were any other excuse necessary for urging upon you additional study of and attention to what Reynolds has left behind him in the way of advice, I might remind you that every year since he lived has raised his reputation higher, and caused his productions to be more admired. Exhibition after exhibition still finds him at the head of English Art, even after so many years of supposed, and in some instances real improvement : men whom we have learned, not without reason, to admire, falling short when put in juxtaposition and immediate comparison with him. I might couple too with this the circumstance that he was the leader and educator of English Art in the days of its infancy, when it more particularly required the experienced head and hand of a foster-father to set it right in its path, and to prevent its going astray. These discourses are the advice he administered in the schools of those days, and has handed down for our guidance at the present moment : and they appear to me as applicable now as at the moment they were written. I will now express my sincere and unqualified



regret that I am not permitted to confine myself literally to the reading of them. The good of the student is the only object of a lecture ; and such would undoubtedly be attained by that process—as well, if not better than by the one I am now pursuing. As it is, however, I have to run over them, and that hastily, for they are fifteen in number, and every one of them contains matter more or less beneficial to the Art I profess.

My object, however, will be gained if I can induce a closer reading of them, and a more thorough belief in and submissive following of the doctrines they set forth in such choice language for the benefit of the learner. Works of a theoretical kind, and especially old ones like Reynolds's, are, I am aware, as a general rule difficult to wade through ; they are dry and uninteresting to the young mind, which has little or no association with the time in which they are written : they are even thought by some to be obsolete. More advanced knowledge is supposed to have superseded and made them useless ; or, at any rate, not worth the reading. All I can, or rather need say, with regard to Sir Joshua's doctrines, is that his works of the brush are not superseded ; and, until that is the case, there is little likelihood that what he has written with his pen should be without value. The light reader may find but little in them, but the quiet studier will discover capital that will serve him for the whole of a professional life. My opening lecture was confined to a description of the man himself, and to his first discourse. I have already this evening read one extract from his second, which he commences by congratulating the student on his progress during the past year. He pats him on the back, praises him for the improvement he has made, and goes on by supposing him to have risen to a higher step in his Art, to a step where, according to

his judgment, criticism should begin, the power of selection should be learnt, and even invention cultivated. He seems now inclined to loosen to a certain extent those shackles he had in his previous discourses placed on the student's mind. He no longer requires in him that blind, unquestioning faith in what has gone before him, which he formerly advocated; but then, he at the same time presumes him to have attained by study a general knowledge of those works which have established themselves as examples of excellence. On this latter point, however, he will have no mistake, as you will perceive by a paragraph which follows, where he says: "The first degree of proficiency is in Sculpture what grammar is in literature—a general preparation for whatever the student may afterwards choose for his particular application. The power of drawing, modelling, and using colours is very properly called the Language of Art."

In a later part also of the same discourse is another paragraph which appears to me to bear on the same point, and is remarkable as well for its clear definition of the word Invention. He says: "It is indisputably evident that a great part of every man's life must be employed in collecting materials for the exercise of genius. Invention, strictly speaking, is little more than a new combination of those images which have been previously gathered and deposited in the memory. Nothing can come of nothing. He who has laid up no materials can produce no combinations." In all this there is sound philosophy, and it is pleasing to find it so authorized, though we may have known before that nothing can come of nothing, without even the additional evidence of a recent amusing picture, that showed us that "twice naught is naught." The mode of study, too, which Sir Joshua recom-

mends, points out to us the cautious, methodical man who is in no hurry, but goes steadily on, determined to make every step safe and sure as he progresses. It is the old story of the tortoise and the hare.

In the second stage of progress, of which he is now treating, he advises the student, and I think wisely, to avoid following the instructions, or I had better say, the style and feeling of any particular master, and, above all, of any modern master. To the question, Upon whom then can he rely? his answer is: "Upon the great masters generally, who have travelled the same road with success, whose works have stood the test of ages, and have a claim to that respect and veneration to which no modern can pretend."

The duration and stability of their fame, he argues, is sufficient to evince that it has not been suspended upon the slender thread of fashion and caprice, but bound to the human heart by every tie of sympathetic approbation. The Art itself, he tells us, should now be the student's teacher, and even this should be tried and tested by reference to the great mistress of all—Nature. In Reynolds's second discourse also is repeated an opinion already put forth in his first, one which I have myself frequently set before you—namely, that the student is his own best instructor. I should not again have alluded to it, but that this time the words in which it is expressed have such a strong Johnsonian sound about them that they might well be taken for his. They seem to exhibit that insight into human nature mixed with just a slight dash of the bitter in its spirit, the residuum perhaps left in the mind of the great philosopher by the early struggles of his life, so characteristic of him. Reynolds or Johnson (I care not which) says: "Few have been taught to any pur-

pose who have not been their own teachers. We prefer those instructions which we have given ourselves from our affection to the instructor." I can fancy Sir Joshua's enemies picking out such plums as these, and declaring that they detect the cook from their flavour, or in other words, recognize the handwriting. Yet there is an inconsistency in the circumstance that these very biographers who throw out innuendoes ascribing the merit of these discourses to Johnson, tell an anecdote which, if true, is so completely of the same calibre, of the same tone of mind, that it may be put forth almost as a proof of the authorship of the paragraph in question. Cunningham relates that at the first meeting of the artist and writer, it was Reynolds's good fortune—why particularly good fortune I do not know—to make an observation which Johnson perceived could only have arisen in the mind of a man who thought for himself. The story is this. Some ladies were regretting the death of a friend to whom they owed great obligations, when Reynolds remarked to them: "You have, however, the comfort of being relieved from the burthen of gratitude." They were shocked at this selfish suggestion, but Johnson maintained that it was true to human nature, and accompanied Reynolds home, and this was the commencement of a friendship which lasted to old age without interruption. The reasoning set up by the biographers appears to me unfair. Is it likely that men like Johnson and Reynolds should have had such long and interesting gossipings on Art, as well as other subjects, without there growing up between them a similarity of expression? They would not have been Johnson and Reynolds had there not. Besides, the denial both one and the other gave to the base insinuation is preferable to all the surmises of envious calumniators.

Before passing over the second lecture I must not omit to urge strongly upon you a bit of advice in it which I think is, beyond almost all else that Reynolds tells us, of service. Its thoroughly practical nature will, I hope, not make you like it the less, yet curiously enough I have never known a student follow it, nor do I ever remember having heard it recommended in our schools. I do not even pretend to have paid attention to it myself, and can only say I wish I had : but simple as it is, it strikes me, now that it is too late for me to make use of it, as one of the most powerful assistants to progress ever suggested by master or followed by pupil. The words are these : "A facility of modelling, like that of playing upon a musical instrument, cannot be acquired but by an infinite number of acts. I need not therefore enforce by many words the necessity of continual application, nor tell you that the modelling-tool ought to be for ever in your hands. Various methods will occur to you by which this power may be acquired. I would particularly recommend, that after your return from the Academy (where I suppose your attendance to be constant) you would endeavour to model the figure from memory. I will even venture to add, that by perseverance in this custom you will become able to model the human figure tolerably correct, with as little effort of the mind as is required to trace with a pen the letters of the alphabet."

I have already recited to you Sir Joshua's opinion that the power of composition is derived from the store of facts accumulated in the memory. That new ideas, so called, are, after all, only an endless change in the arrangement of those facts. That the imaginative mind creates nothing ; but merely combines things after a new order and a fresh fashion, just in the

same way as the musician produces a new harmony of sound on the piano, from notes in themselves unchanged. That this opinion is a correct one, I fancy you will feel, from that slight consideration only your profession calls upon you to bestow on it; and I am confident its truth will be established on your mind by a deeper thinking on the question, such as you would be called upon to give it by a love of natural philosophy. I may add too, that it is the more to be relied on from its being that of a cautious, considering man, rather than a hasty, impulsive one. In all this consists the importance of the mode of study recommended by Reynolds. The reproducing your model from memory immediately after you have produced it from life, not only increases your knowledge of the human figure, but it promotes facility of invention by storing up in your memories truths which exist in Nature. By adopting it you will be at once exerting two faculties within you—that of your hand, which after a while will go by itself, or like a child, learn to run alone, if it be only taken care of for a year or so; and that of your memory, the storehouse from whence you will have by-and-by to draw all the sustenance for your Art. May I hope that the students will adopt in future this method?—not at my recommendation, but at that of our great first president, to whom we owe so much. I should look upon their doing so as an earnest that a more serious, a more continuous system of study was being carried on than, I regret to say, I find at the present moment in our schools. Young men attend for a while, model one or two figures—sometimes hardly that—from the Antique: or at the best get into the Life Academy, where they stay but a short time, and we then see no more of them, unless it be for a week or two during the

competition for the medals. The anxiety to earn money takes them off from their studies, from that which is the only foundation on which true greatness can be built or a permanent reputation erected ; and this anxiety, given way to in the early part of their career, leaves them in the end at the point where they begin, for the most part mere journeymen, instead of masters and originators in their art. I am quite aware of the difficulty that exists, for I do not go with the Judge, who when the prisoner pleaded the necessity of living as an excuse for his crime, replied, that he did not see the necessity. I have been a journeyman myself, wasted the best part of my life, if not for the benefit of, at any rate in serving another ; and in this there is all the more reason why you should believe me when I say that this inattention to education—I am now speaking of the practical part—is the cause why our school of Sculpture does not, in some respects at least, stand so high as that of other countries. You might divide your efforts, stoop at certain moments to pick up your bread when you see it lying before you, and give the rest of your time to improvement. The ladies appear to me the most constant students in our schools, perhaps because they are not so tempted away by opportunities of earning the filthy pelf ; but then they have other difficulties to contend with which the gentlemen students have not. In saying this I am perhaps presuming too much : I am taking for granted that what applies in most instances to young artists, applies to all—namely, that they are compelled by circumstances to earn their bread at the same time that they are learning their profession. There are, I have no doubt, exceptions to this : we have now and then among us those who, by Fortune's favour, are relieved from this double labour.

But while speaking from this desk I may say that no one need envy those exceptions: for the want of that hard training which the old lady Necessity puts upon us in our youth, in nine cases out of ten enervates them in after life, and renders them incapable of that strenuous exertion required by a difficult pursuit. In some instances it has a tendency, by creating too high an opinion of themselves, to make them blind to the length of the road they have to travel on, and under the idea that they have reached the end, to stop at a halfway house, where they sit down by the way-side, and admire themselves in the passing stream. If any student needs encouragement, or feels himself inclined to make the want of means an excuse for not attending the schools, let him look round the circle of his most successful brethren; let him open Bryan's or Pilkington's Dictionary of Artists, or read the various biographies of eminent men; how many will he find among them who have not had their early struggles, their many disappointments, and their almost insurmountable difficulties to contend with, in the starting of the race, and some of them even at the end of it, when they were naturally looking for rest? What has been conquered heretofore, can be conquered now. Reynolds, of whom we are now treating, had to go through this ordeal in his youth; and it not only helped to make him the great painter he was, but imparted to him that steady, even balance of the mind, which secured him in later days from many vicissitudes and many mistakes. He would hardly too, without it, have been the experienced and unbiassed thinker that could write these discourses. In them, as you go on, you will find that from time to time there are repetitions—that he reiterates the advice already given: this was a necessity arising from the circum-



stances under which he had to deliver them : long intervals occurred, as you know, between each ; and as year after year rolled on, he found himself addressing students of different degrees of advancement. What served for one who was at the beginning of his career was not enough for another who was a step more forward. Thus, in his third discourse he again bids some of them follow in childlike faith the models of excellence that are placed before them, while he bids others compare those models with Nature, that they may understand the selection from her, made in the Antique, as well as comprehend the foundation on which those examples of excellence are created. To a third and more matured set of learners he now says, they are to analyze Nature herself, in order to be able to perceive in what consists her beauties, what are her general characteristics, and where she has deviated from her rules, and so fallen into individual defects and weaknesses. This leads him of course to the question of beauty, which he sets before the students, perhaps in rather a slight manner, but at the same time in a perfectly correct one. There is enough in what he lays down to enable them to unravel by themselves all the threads of the argument, and to reduce it to a simple problem of cause and effect. He speaks of there being a central form in Nature from which all inferior forms deviate into deformity. In this you might mistake his meaning, did he not afterwards acknowledge, as I think he means to do, though I am not quite certain, that each species in Nature has its own centre of form separate and distinct from all others. It is, in fact, the old and the only tenable opinion, that utility is beauty ; that the best-made creatures in each division of Nature are beautiful, because they are the best suited to perform the functions for

which they were created and to fulfil the position allotted to them. It only remains for the artist to study those intentions, and by comparison to learn what is most adapted to them. When he has ascertained this, and taught his hand to portray what his brain has conceived, he will at once put forth what are called classical shapes; he will admit no vulgarities into his style, nor deviate into what is useless or irrelevant to the expression he intends to convey. I will give you here the passage from Reynolds in which he conveys his meaning on the point, as there is an acknowledgment of a truth in it as regards ancient Sculpture. He declares to the students: "It is from a reiterated experience, and a close comparison of the objects in Nature, that an artist becomes possessed of the idea of that central form, if I may so express it, from which every deviation is deformity. But the investigation of this form, I grant, is painful, and I know but of one method of shortening the road—this is, by a careful study of the works of the ancient sculptors, who, being indefatigable in the school of Nature, have left models of that perfect form behind them which an artist would prefer as supremely beautiful who had spent his whole life in that single contemplation. May not you also hope for the same reward from the same labour? We have the same school opened to us that was opened to them: for Nature denies her instructions to none who desire to become her pupils."

While acknowledging the compliment paid to my Art, I would rather that dependence should be placed upon the latter part of the paragraph, where he says that Nature denies her instructions to none who desire to become her pupils, than upon any aid which may be obtained from the Antique: the

latter may serve perhaps to begin upon, but anyone who means really to understand his lesson must dive into the original language, and not content himself with what may be termed, after all, but a sort of crib.

Reynolds goes in rather a lengthy manner into the question of Beauty: he follows what I have already quoted to you, by a further observation. Thus, speaking of the Hercules, the Gladiator, and the Apollo, he says: "It is true, indeed, that these figures are each perfect in their kind, though of different characters and proportions: but still none of them is the representation of an individual, but of a class. And as there is one general form, which, as I have said, belongs to the human kind at large, so in each of these classes there is one common idea and central form, which is the abstract of the various individual forms belonging to that class. Thus, though the forms of childhood and age differ exceedingly, there is a common form in age, which is the more perfect as it is more remote from all peculiarities. But I must add, further, that though the most perfect forms of each of the general divisions of the human figure are ideal, and superior to any individual form of that class, yet the highest perfection of the human figure is not to be found in any one of them. It is not in the Hercules, nor in the Gladiator, nor in the Apollo; but in that form which is taken from all, and which partakes equally of the activity of the Gladiator, of the delicacy of the Apollo, and of the muscular strength of the Hercules. For perfect beauty in any species must combine all the characters which are beautiful in that species. It cannot consist in any one to the exclusion of the rest: no one, therefore, must be predominant, that no one may be deficient."

With this I agree—perhaps even with the concluding part of the paragraph, in theory ; though, practically, I fear it would be impossible to realize the combination he there speaks of. The peculiarities of one form would negative those of another if united with them, without producing a more beautiful type ; for the excellences at which they each aim, appear to me divergences from a centre, so that by a nearer approach to one you become farther off from the others. In this I may of course be wrong—I am not, in fact, endeavouring in these lectures to set up my opinion against that of Reynolds, I am rather urging upon you more attention to him—but I cannot help thinking that even if this abstract of all the types of humanity could be obtained, no good result would arise : and one thing is certain, that an uninteresting monotony, which, however beautiful, would eventually pall upon our senses and so defeat its own effect, would be substituted for that infinite variety which is so charming, whether in Nature or Art. Utility, too, would be weakened, for Nature requires these varieties for her different purposes ; she does not require every individual, even of the same species, to fulfil the same task, or to perform the same amount of labour as the rest.

I have already told you, I think, that you must look for Beauty in that general combination set before us in Nature, and not from a singling out of individual parts. You may sift from her works those examples where she has fallen short, so as to gain a perception of her when she develops herself to her full extent ; but you must not strive to unite her expressions where she has chosen to vary them, nor to remove parts from their proper place. If you will view her in this broad light, and keep the word purpose constantly in your mind, you will

indeed find in her, under many forms, but one intention, and that intention, Beauty. She may exhibit occasional defects, failures through weakness in individual cases, but you have no right to look upon her as wrong in her system generally. She has thought it right to have variations everywhere, in order to meet the circumstances under which each individual class is placed, so as to extend its power of fulfilling what it is allotted to perform. In the human figure she has given that variety of which Reynolds has been speaking, and it would not be well that you should attempt to do away with it in your imitation of her. I doubt, in fact, if it is in your power to do so.

From this broad question of general beauty, your president passes on to one of almost equal importance, especially to the Art of Sculpture, which has always, more or less, to deal with Nature in her most unsophisticated state. I mean the power of detecting the difference between those habits which belong to us from our birth, irrespective of education, and those which are the result of caprice or fashion. The faculty of distinguishing them one from another may appear at first sight an easy one, but it is not so, for many of them are so intermingled with each other as to be almost inseparable : some of the children of the latter are, in fact, only exaggerations of our natural propensities—Art caricatures of what Nature has taught us for our good ; in some, again, Nature is modified, perhaps improved, by being deprived of a certain over-boldness of manner that conveys the idea of coarseness. Much of the grace displayed in the movements of a high-bred lady is the result of mental as well as physical training. Whilst she moves with a native elegance that gives pleasure to the beholder, the command she retains over herself prevents that movement from being excessive ; her

reserve, in fact, in most cases, causes it to appear less than is necessary for its purpose. She would scarcely do the same thing in the same manner as would one of those primitive ideal beings, the creation of Hesiod in his golden age.

This, again, the sculptor should bear in mind. Reynolds, after giving a rap at the affectation of the dancing-master and the drilling of the serjeant, both bitter enemies to that simplicity which is the very essence of true Art, goes on to say : " However the mechanic and ornamental Arts may sacrifice to Fashion, she must be entirely excluded from the Art of Sculpture : the sculptor must never mistake this capricious changeling for the genuine offspring of Nature ; he must divest himself of all prejudices in favour of his age or country ; he must disregard all local and temporary ornaments, and look only on those general habits which are everywhere and always the same ; he addresses his work to the people of every country and every age, he calls upon posterity to be his spectators, and says with Zeuxis, *In æternitatem pingo.*" There is no doubt that this is in the main degree true, and the student would do well to pay strict attention to it ; yet some modification of the rule may be, even here, necessary. Grace and natural beauty end, it is true, where the dancing-master, the drill-serjeant, and the dressmaker begin : the one turns out our toes, as Reynolds tells us, and so spoils the natural action of our feet ; the second stiffens our knees, throws out our chest, and upsets our natural balance ; while the third, by squeezing in the waists and expanding the surrounding parts, destroys all the fascinating undulation of the figure. The Art of dancing, as far as it is the result of expression, is natural and beautiful, but the contrary where affectation begins ; and it, with that of the drill-master, becomes the result of rules

and restrictions, whilst the Art of the dressmaker, so far as it has been carried out in modern times, is the concealing of all that is lovely in Nature. The sculptor has, it is true, to use Reynolds's words, to address his works to the people of every country and every age ; but he has also, in many instances, to portray the manners of the time to which his subject belongs. Reynolds, though he preached this doctrine of *In æternitatem pingo*, never went so far as to subvert: he did not dress his ladies in Greek draperies, nor represent his noblemen lying about on the grass, like Salvator Rosa's brigands ; he merely modified the fashion or habit of his sitters, reduced the absurdities of their costume, or hid them by his arrangement of light and shade. We know this in many ways ; among others by Toffani's pictures, where all the monstrosities and affectations of the day are given in undisguised truth and unabated vigour.

The sculptor has frequently to take advantage of this lesson ; he too, more perhaps than any other artist, has to soften down the peculiarities of habit and custom that prevail at the period he is dealing with. Often, indeed, when his subject carries him back to the early ages, he has to divest himself entirely of modern associations, to keep clear of all that is the offspring of later periods. This, you will say, requires no great discrimination to do, as far as the introduction of the nude and the management of drapery is concerned ; but it is not there exactly that the difficulty occurs and the error has to be avoided. I have noticed sculptors who, when treating of antiquity, have imparted a character to the figures which belongs to later times ; have represented them in actions which have much of artificial education in them ; and even shown a tendency to forms thought by recent critics the very acme of perfection, but found, when

tested by the severer rules of beauty, subversive of all proper proportion and real propriety. In opposition to this, the sculptor, when engaged on portraiture, as much his Art as that of the painter, has not only to observe and keep in mind the general manners of the day, but often the particular habits of the person he is called upon to portray. These in many instances may be deviations from what is, strictly speaking, pure and unaffected Nature, but they become all the more for that very reason indicative of the individual. They display themselves mostly in action, in general bearing or carriage, in what old Turveydrop calls deportment; and for this reason should never be entirely omitted, as they remain stronger on the memory than almost anything else, and so become the data in after days by which the resemblance is recognized.

Who among you, when picturing to himself Harry the Eighth, does not make him stand, like Holbein's portrait, with his legs far apart? It was thought in his time the very quintessence of manliness; half the portraits of his courtiers stand, out of compliment and deference to the King, in the same position: you are hardly able to conceive that excellent monarch in any other attitude, and yet it would not be easy to persuade you that it is even quite natural, much less graceful. It was strongly indicative of the man, and so could not be omitted in the representation of him. Who is there that does not remember Reynolds's picture of his purblind friend Johnson, with his half-closed eyes, thinking with his hands, or at any rate assisting in the birth of thought by the working of his nervous fingers? To Reynolds we may always turn with confidence for advice in any department of Art, but more particularly in portraiture, which was his own; but we must look for it from two



sources conjointly—from his works and from his words. He requires, however, to be read in the most careful manner, and with an unprejudiced mind, so that his meaning may not be misunderstood. For instance, a reader who passes his eye carelessly over the latter part of his third discourse, might fancy that his object was to disparage the lower walks of Art, and to advise the student to neglect entirely the study of close imitation. He might think that Reynolds considered the grand style of Art to consist in the absence of all detail and of all truthful copying. Such, however, could not be the case; though it must be acknowledged that in some of his less finished pictures there is a negligence in this respect that would tend to justify the belief that this was his opinion. We know—and he must have known—however, that in all the grandest works of Art, whether ancient or modern, there is just that truth of imitation in every part which satisfies the eye, and leaves the mind free and undisturbed to contemplate the general purpose. The minute threading of the draperies is not shown, nor the differences of texture loudly insisted upon; but their foldings, whether in the paintings of Raffaele or in the antique statues, are as intelligible as they would be in reality.

The difference, or at least one of the differences, between the grand style of Art and the lower ones, whether of Sculpture or Painting, lies in the minutiae not being so wrought out as to attract attention from the main expression of the whole. In Raffaele's compositions the clothing of the various figures is suitable to the wearers, elegant in its line, and at the same time in harmony with what is about it: but our attention is not distracted by it from the chief purpose, as it often is in the Dutch school, where an almost marvellous imitation of a satin gown

or a richly-patterned carpet, fascinates us for a while and draws us away from the chief point of the picture. Both are good Art, but only one, Raffaele's, is grand Art; and the distinction is equally good for Sculpture as for Painting.

Of all that Reynolds has said, however, in these Academy discourses this is the one piece of advice I would wish the student to follow with the most caution: he need not entirely reject it, nor be too much carried away by it; his own good sense will teach him how far it is valuable, and where it becomes worthless. Sir Joshua seems, indeed, to fear he may be mistaken on this point, for he afterwards says: "I should be sorry if what is here recommended should be at all understood to countenance a careless or undetermined manner of working: for though the sculptor is to overlook the accidental discriminations of Nature, he is to exhibit distinctly and with precision the general forms of things."

One word more, and I have done—it is a painful one. Reynolds seems inclined—at least I think so—to underrate Hogarth, then not long in his grave. He damns him with faint praise—that most poisonous of all weapons. I have advocated him in almost all else, and though I cannot quite justify him in this, I will endeavour to make such excuses for him as I can. Hogarth, though now justly placed on so high a pedestal, had at that time apparently a very dubious sort of fame. True, his genius had drawn after him the mass of the public, and he had made a fortune out of the popularity his prints more particularly had made for him; but among his brother artists the permanent nature of his reputation was much doubted. That they were wrong has since shown itself; though perhaps they were right so far, that the species of Art he practised with such wonderful

genius was not one that helped to elevate style, or to carry forward the doctrines proper to an Academy. Reynolds may have felt all this, but there was yet more behind. Hogarth, while he had acquired many friends and much celebrity, had made many enemies; had offended multitudes by the lampoons he had thrown out on all sides, the bitterness of which was the more that there was no small amount of truth at the bottom of them. Reynolds's doctrines, if not Reynolds himself, as well as the Academy, in which he took so much pride, came in for a share. It would have been therefore wonderful if some indication of feeling had not peeped out from under the warm covering of his presidential gown.

You will accuse me of having deserted my walk and intruded myself upon that of other men. Perhaps I have done so, but my object has been a good one. I have wished to draw you on to the study of a great man's sayings, to the storing up in your minds of the riches of other men's thoughts, so that they may be joined to those of your own construction; and to the taking by these means a wider range and more comprehensive view of your Art. That you will be the better for so doing, whatever department you may follow, I am confident; and that the pleasure you will feel in that department will be the greater, I am certain.





LECTURE XII.

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS. No. III.



ET another dish of Reynolds's discourses may seem a kind of *toujours perdrix*, neither very pleasing to the appetite nor good for the digestion : but, however uninteresting and monotonous my lecturing on them may appear, I can assure the student that, if he will but take up the book itself and study it with an earnest spirit, he will find it an *olla-podrida* of intellect and knowledge. All I can do is just to give a slight glance at it, so as if possible to excite a desire for the feast, and then leave it before him to partake of, or not, as he may please.

The necessity for keeping to those parts which have a bearing on the Art I profess, obliges me to leave untouched those morsels, often the richest he offers, which refer to Painting alone, so that I can scarcely be accused of appropriating to myself the choice bits of the table ; yet it is rarely, if ever, that even these do not send forth some flavour agreeable to the olfactory nerves of the sculptor as well as the painter.

You will remember that on the last evening when I was endeavouring to bring Reynolds's opinions before you, we were discussing that part where he touches on the question of Beauty,

and where he says the Hercules, the Gladiator, and the Apollo represent so many separate ideas of beauty; and afterwards asserts that perfect beauty must combine all the characters which are beautiful, and goes on by stating that it cannot consist in any one to the exclusion of the rest, but that no one must be predominant, nor any one deficient. I hinted to you, as you will recollect, that I thought this combination impossible in either Nature or Art, and that I believed Art would be deserting her allegiance to Nature by attempting it. Such is the pleasure felt by little people like myself at finding a great man tripping, that I will even pass over several pages of his work in order to quote to you one where he contradicts himself on this point, and, as I understand him, goes with what I have told you. In his fifth discourse he says: "Some excellences bear to be united, and are improved by union; others are of a discordant nature, and the attempt to join them only produces a harsh jarring of incongruent principles. The attempt to unite contrary excellences (of form, for instance) in a single figure, can never escape degenerating into the monstrous but by sinking into the insipid; by taking away its marked character, and weakening its expression."

As Sir Joshua finds himself year after year addressing the students, he appears to descend a step from his throne, to desert those generalities he at first dwelt upon, and to touch more on detail and on those smaller points necessary for the student's safety on his journey: he seems to think that the scholar is now getting far on in the most difficult part of the road, where dangers mostly occur and temptations beset him.

The fourth discourse commences with a repetition of Sir Joshua's favourite axiom, that the grand style consists, to use

his own words, in leaving out all particularities and retaining only general ideas. I do not go wholly with him in this: it may be partly true, but surely there is something more required. Were the system carried out with religious strictness, it would lead, I fancy, to a perfect nullity: something must be added to every work professedly belonging to the grand style in order to give it distinctness of character and individual expression. I may leave this question, however, to the student's consideration, as I believe I have already touched upon it; my partial dissent from the President's opinion will show that I do not wish any one to read his book with a blind adulation which accepts everything as gospel and questions nothing. So far from this, I would have everything criticized, provided it can be done with an unbiassed mind and an unprejudiced spirit. He makes a comparison between the Roman and the Venetian schools of Painting, claiming, and no doubt justly, superiority for the former over the latter, from its greater attention to form and less dependence on colour, and from its exhibiting less effort at display. This, perfectly true, is evidence again of how much he felt the value of Sculpture, which deals in form alone; and I would have you recollect that it is evidence given by one who was greater in colour than in form, and who was at the head of the English school, thought by himself, and still considered, the best one extant in this quality. There is no prejudice here, for if there had been it would have been in favour of the other side. I have no wish to underrate the charm of colour, but I have no hesitation in saying that our school of Art would be greater were more attention paid to purity of outline and grandeur of form generally. In this, in fact—not to resort to pernicious flattery—it is decidedly wanting.

Almost everything—whether relating to the human passions, the greatest field for high Art, or to the lower stages where little more than imitation is called for—can be expressed by form without resort to colour at all ; while colour by itself is restricted to things of a vague and general nature. It can convey the impression of the gloomy or the gay, the brilliant or the sombre, the sad or the joyous ; but by itself it can enter into no definite ideas, no distinct understanding with the spectator.

It is upon these grounds of comparison that Reynolds prefers the Roman to the Venetian school. The two great works belonging to each, the “*Transfiguration*” of Raphael and the “*Assumption*” of Titian, bear him out in this. In the one you are drawn to it by the admirable manner in which the tale is told, by the powerful expression of the figures, and by the natural grouping of the whole ; your thoughts go at once with reverence to the subject itself, and you almost forget the painter and his Art : whilst with the other, glorious as it is, you are carried away by the beauty of colour, the artistic effect of light and shade, and the display of artificial arrangement. Both are great, great indeed ; the world has already decided them to be so : but while Titian’s is great in Art, Raphael’s is great in something that is almost beyond Art.

You will say that I am not judging the case fairly, as sufficient weight is not given to the charm of colour, undoubtedly most attractive ; but I prefer taking a general, rather than an artistic view of the question. The best schools of Art are, and ever will be, for the above reason, those which have given most attention to form ; and I think the student, especially the English one, may take a lesson from this if he will but consider it.

There are also in the fifth discourse some excellent remarks on the relative value of secondary parts or accessories, and on the necessity of proper reserve in the use of them, more especially in the grand style, summed up in words which apply to Sculpture even more than to Painting, as accessories are, and ought to be, there used even more sparingly than in the other Art. Reynolds says: "The painter, I will add the sculptor, will not inquire what things *may* be admitted without much censure; he will not think it enough to show that they *may* be there: he will show that they *must* be there; that their absence would render his picture maimed and defective." How true this is I need not tell you, nor how well the rule has been kept in antique Sculpture—indeed, in all great works. We have the Venus de Medici, accompanied by her Dolphin with the Cupid on its back, indicating her absorbing power and ocean birth; the Python by the side of the Apollo, to show the poisonous swamp his rays have destroyed; and the Boar's head lying by the statue of Meleager, to remind us of his employment and his death. All these are kept in subordination to the statues themselves, yet all are necessary to point out their history and meaning: the accessories would not be there but that, to use Sir Joshua's words, they must be, as their absence would render the work unintelligible. I believe, in fact, that there is hardly anything that points out more distinctly the different grades that connect the high and the vulgar style of Art, whether in Sculpture or Painting, than the comparative reserve or importance given to accessories. Wherever Sculpture has become degraded—and I may as well confine myself to my own Art—ornament is resorted to profusely, and a multitude of objects are introduced unnecessary to the proper reading of the story:



draperies or dresses become more complicated in the foldings, and decorated with a richness which only serves to disturb the quietude and obscure the meaning of the whole. If you wish to impress this on your mind, call up together in your imagination Flaxman's illustrations of the Greek poets and some work of Sculpture belonging to the time of Charles II., when the Art fell into the lowest state as to style. Compare the two in this respect. In one you will find everything expressed by the figures alone, often wholly unassisted by accessories of any kind ; and that where accessories are introduced, it is with a reserve that, but for this excellent reason, might be pronounced poverty-stricken in the extreme. In the other you will find accessories used in the most profuse abundance ; frequently for no other purpose but to fill up space or to create a busy effect. In this particular the Sculpture of that age commits the sin of display in a greater degree than the Venetian school of Painting, of which Reynolds complains, without even the licence to commit it the use of colour gives to Art. Sculpture followed Painting too much, and, like all followers, it followed it in the faults rather than in the excellences of that which it took for copy.

I will now call your attention to a paragraph on portrait painting which will serve equally for a portrait statue, and seems to me to illustrate strongly that common-sense view Sir Joshua took of everything. I must give it you in full, as it would not be fair to quote parts of it without their context. The words are these : "I cannot avoid mentioning here a circumstance in portrait painting which may help to confirm what has been said. When a portrait is painted in the historical style, as it is neither an exact minute representation of an indi-

vidual nor completely ideal, every circumstance ought to correspond to this mixture. The simplicity of the antique air and attitude, however much to be admired, is ridiculous when joined to a figure in a modern dress. It is not to my purpose to enter into the question at present whether this mixed style ought to be adopted or not ; yet, if it is chosen, it is necessary it should be complete and all of a piece. The difference of stuffs, for instance, which make the clothing should be distinguished in the same degree as the head deviates from a general idea : without this union, which I have so often recommended, a work can have no marked and determined character, which is the peculiar and constant evidence of genius. But when this is accomplished to a high degree, it becomes in some sort a rival to that style which we have fixed as the highest." The harmony necessary between the modern portrait head—which, as a matter of course, deviates somewhat from the purely ideal—and the working out of the drapery into different materials, however general its character and arrangements, is admirably insisted on in this short paragraph, and it would be well for you to keep it in your mind.

An instance where the value of this suggestion has not been duly felt, and where, in consequence, an incongruous effect is produced, may probably come to your recollection in the statue of Sir Robert Peel in Westminster Abbey. The head essentially belongs to the nineteenth century—no treatment could or ought to make it otherwise—while the drapery, not only in its arrangement, but in its rigid style of execution, belongs to the date of Greek antique Art : the two styles can never unite, any more than the two dates can meet. The sculptor, though very talented, was, I may say, a bigoted follower of ancient ideas ; while Sir Joshua was a reasoning man, who weighed well every-

thing. I prefer, in consequence, the advice of the latter to the former. His judgment seems to me to settle most admirably the question now agitating the world of Art respecting the proper clothing of our portrait statues. He would have you treat them neither too literally nor with too great departure from fact; at least, such seems to be the rule he laid down for his portraits, and I think it is equally good for statues.

The sculptor of the figure of Peel might, perhaps, in defence of his treatment, resort to the evidence of Sir Joshua himself, in a sentence where he says that perfect form is produced by leaving out particularities and retaining general ideas; and in another, where he tells us that if a "portrait painter is desirous to raise and improve his subject, he has no other means than by approaching it to a general idea. He leaves out all the minute breaks and peculiarities in the face, and changes the dress from a temporary fashion to one more permanent, which has annexed to it no ideas of meanness from its being familiar to us." But the using of antique habiliments for a modern figure is no more a leaving out of particularities than would be the introduction of the most every-day dress of the present time, nor can it be said to be more permanent than any other. It is simply an anachronism, and as such, I need not say, should be avoided. Use the costume of the period liberally, and you may unite sufficient likeness with fine Art and proper consistency; use it slavishly, and I doubt if you will be more successful in the one, while you will certainly fail in both the others. As we proceed on I think we detect Sir Joshua's character more distinctly in his writings. That his doctrine is sound in the main, there can be no question; but whether, when we find him laying particular, and perhaps undue stress

on some parts of what he says, it is in consequence of thorough self-knowledge or an unconscious reflection of himself, it would be difficult to decide. I hardly know if you will sit quiet while I give you my opinion from this desk, that, notwithstanding the great works he has left behind him, notwithstanding his highly-deserved success, he was the possessor of but little genius ; but such I cannot help thinking was the case. Let me hasten, before you pelt me with stones, to explain what I mean. He had hardly any invention, very little imagination ; what he did was more an improvement on other people's ideas than very original in itself. His style was founded on that of his predecessors, rather than, strictly speaking, his own ; but then it was an advance, if not upon all, upon nearly all that had been previously arrived at. Hence it is that we find him an unbeliever in what he sarcastically calls inspiration, and a believer that thoughtful industry and perseverance will almost always produce effects tantamount to those supposed to emanate from genius alone. Hence, again, it is that we find him so able an arguer on all questions relating to Art, and such a strict layer-down of all its rules ; such a profound searcher after first causes, and such an ardent tracer of them through all their variations to their effects. What other men looked upon as merely accidental eccentricities he viewed as mathematical problems, to be solved by reason, and reason alone. If, in consequence of all this, he is never in the clouds, he is at all times sure of the ground on which he stands ; and he carried out the talent that was in him to the greatest possible extent. I am not certain he was right in doubting, as he seems to have done, the existence of innate ideas, and in believing that excellence could be attained without them : but I am certain

that he is exactly the sort of man to whom a pupil possessing genius would do well to listen for advice. He is ever a depend-er on rules, never an enthusiast, does not mislead with false hopes, or counsel confidence upon systems of study not likely to succeed. He is a deliberate man ; has thought on all the points of his discourse before giving them to you ; has a reason for, and tells you the consequence of everything he touches upon : and yet leaves a certain margin, so as not to trammel you too much with rules or circumscribe you with limits. He knows of but one road to eminence, and looks upon all eccentricities from the one style as so many methy-lated spirits that escape the duty imposed upon Art.

In an after-part of this same fifth discourse, where he is comparing the merits of Michael Angelo and Raphael, he speaks, in fact, of these eccentricities as arising from a wish among their successors to deviate from a road on which they felt they were beaten, and where they were hopeless of outstripping these great masters. When this desire of novelty, Reynolds says, has proceeded from idleness or caprice, it is not worth the trouble of criticism ; but when it is the result of a busy mind of a peculiar complexion, it is always striking and interesting, never insipid. He afterwards adds : “ In the great style, as it appears to those who possessed it at its height, search after *novelty* in conception or in treating the subject has no place ; ” and this again, as it appears to me, he qualifies by asserting that “ the faults or defects of some men seem to become them when they appear to be the natural growth, and of a piece with the rest of their character. A faithful picture of a mind, though it be not of the most elevated kind ; though it be irregular, wild, and incorrect, yet, if it be marked with that spirit and firmness which

characterize works of genius, will claim attention, and be more striking than a combination of excellences that do not seem to unite well together ; or, we may say, than a work that possesses even all excellences, but those in a moderate degree."

This mode of argument may appear somewhat pendulum-like, from its swinging so from one side to the other ; but the sum total of what he means may be readily calculated by placing each figure of his discourse in its proper place, and adding to them the cautious character of the writer. If it should strike you that he clings almost too closely to the grand style in his preaching, that he is disinclined to allow any merit whatever to the inferior walks, you must recollect that he was speaking to those who had first to run the race for fame in the English school ; that the goal for which they were about to start had scarcely been caught sight of by any in this country ; and that it was, for this reason, the more necessary for him to point out where it stood, and to caution them against the many obstacles they might meet with in their way. The variety of styles, the divergences since discovered from what was then looked upon as the only road to high Art, were, if not unknown, not believed in ; yet the point to be aimed at remains the same. Listen to what he says upon it : "Keep your principal attention fixed upon the higher excellences. If you compass them, and compass nothing more, you are still in the first class. We may regret the innumerable beauties which you may want ; you may be very imperfect : but still, you are an imperfect artist of the highest order." You will read this simple aphorism, I think, with unqualified belief ; and you will go with him in what he says soon after about expression, though perhaps not so unhesitatingly. He tells you that, "if you mean to preserve the

most perfect beauty in its most perfect state" (I am quoting him now), "you cannot express the passions, all of which produce distortion and deformity more or less in the most beautiful faces." This he afterwards illustrates—to my mind not very happily—by referring to the works of Guido, and then goes on to show the absurdity of endeavouring to portray a mixed expression in a figure. He attributes, in fact, the idea of any face or figure possessing these mixed or many expressions at one time to the imagination of critics, who, in their anxiety to praise works of past ages, attribute to them qualities they never possessed—never, in fact, dreamt of by their authors.

I will give Sir Joshua's opinion on this question in his own words, though they are rather long for me to quote. He says: "They always find in them what they are resolved to find. They praise excellences that can hardly exist together, and above all things are fond of describing with great exactness the expression of a mixed passion, which more particularly appears to me out of the reach of our Art. Such are many disquisitions which I have read on some of the cartoons and other pictures of Raphael, where the critics have described their own imaginations—or, indeed, where the excellent master himself may have attempted this expression of passions above the powers of the Art, and has therefore, by an indistinct and imperfect marking, left room for every imagination, with equal probability, to find a passion of its own. What has been and what can be done in the Art is sufficiently difficult; we need not be mortified or discouraged at not being able to execute the conceptions of a romantic imagination. Art has its boundaries, though imagination has none. We can easily, like the ancients, suppose a Jupiter to be possessed of all those powers and perfections which the subordinate deities were en-

dowed with separately. Yet when they employed their Art to represent him, they confined his character to majesty alone. Pliny, therefore, though we are under great obligations to him for the information he has given us in relation to the works of the ancient artists, is very frequently wrong when he speaks of them—which he does very often—in the style of many of our modern connoisseurs. He observes, that in a statue of Paris, by Euphranor, you might discover at the same time three different characters: the dignity of a judge of the goddesses, the lover of Helen, and the conqueror of Achilles. A statue in which you endeavour to unite stately dignity, youthful elegance, and stern valour must surely possess none of these to any eminent degree." These are the President's words, and were I inclined to be ill-natured, I might turn them against what he has previously stated with regard to beauty; but that is apart from the question: what is here written appears to me to be true.

It may seem to you like a limiting of Art to declare that it is incapable of all that dwells in the imagination of critics; but the knowing its limits will relieve the student's mind from much anxiety. If a simple, unmixed expression is obtained in a statue, indeed in any work of Art, all will, I think, be accomplished that is required, all, indeed, that Art is capable of; and the artist need not trouble his brain about deficiencies which exist only in the minds of those who are more anxious to exhibit the profundity of their own ideas than to appreciate the beauty of what is put before them. That I have never myself worked out a multiplicity of expressions in the same face may be no argument in the matter; but that I have never found this combination existing either in Nature or Art at the same



moment may have some weight with you. Character and expression may co-exist, and when a suitable union is contrived, they will strengthen each other ; but they are different terms. The one is a thing that belongs to its possessor permanently ; that is never absent in whatever occupation he may be engaged or in whatever circumstances he may be placed : the other is a momentary matter arising out of immediate impulse, or the impress made by the circumstances by which he is surrounded.

Sometimes character and expression may, so to speak, oppose each other ; but this want of union, so far from weakening, often tends to strengthen effect ; as for instance, where a beautiful woman is represented as the subject of great distress, or with an expression of violent pain or anger. Her face and figure can hardly be considered as the most appropriate for the exhibition of the one or the portraying of the other : yet the unsuitable, untoward circumstances in which she is placed excite our sympathies and so draw us the more towards her ; and I believe it is in this sort of representation that critics imagine they have discovered the double or mixed expression of which they speak. This supposed mixed expression arises really, in most instances, from the union of two or more figures or faces in the same work ; each playing its own single part in the drama, and, where a story is conveyed by them together, having many phases, and causing a variety of sensations in the beholder : and these the imagination of the critic leads him to fancy are derived from the attitude and expression of the principal figure alone, instead of from a combination of the whole.

One of the axioms I would wish you to keep more particularly in sight is, that you should not take too complicated a view of either the principles, the means, or the object of your Art ; but

look at them all in a simple and unaffected spirit, as things completely under your control, and lying within your comprehension. The eminent man whose writings I am quoting to you this evening was an example of this. He did not take a law as inflexible, nor a problem as insoluble: he considered both well; but when once he had ascertained the justice of the one, and obtained the solution of the other, he did not stretch either beyond their original intention or purpose in order to carry out his own views of Art. I will here acknowledge that I am conscious of repeating in these lectures the same ideas, the like doctrines, under different words. Art, to whatever department it may belong, is of so simple a character that there is little in the way of instruction which can be conveyed by language alone. In Painting, as far as I am acquainted with it, there appears least of all, owing to the wider range which it takes and its being less restricted by rules; in Sculpture there is somewhat more, from its closer connection with mechanical labour and its dealing with more varied materials; whilst it must be allowed that in Architecture there is much that may be demonstrated with certainty by the lecturer, from its closer connection with geometrical science. Yet none of them are happy subjects for verbal discussion. Some few general theories may be inculcated by the teacher, but the rest must be obtained by positive practice; and though the head may receive help from an exchange of ideas, the hand will obey the impulse of him alone to whom it belongs. My apology for reiteration will be that I wish to impress upon you that the doctrines come from your great President teacher himself, who seems indeed to see the same difficulty, and, by excusing himself, to plead guilty to the same error. He has, however, an excellent excuse for it—better

than mine—for he says to the student, soon after what I have already quoted to you: “If I repeat my own notions on the subject, you, who know how fast mistake and prejudice, when neglected, gain ground upon truth and reason, will easily excuse me. I only attempt to set the same thing in the greatest variety of lights.” If still followed, some excellent remarks on imitation will be found in his sixth discourse—remarks of infinite service, more especially at the present moment, when, in Sculpture, we are rather inclined to throw aside all that has gone before us, and to imagine that by setting up new rules, or rather by knocking down old ones, we shall assert our independence, and create a commune of ideas that shall be better than any previous government. The thinking Reynolds, however, speaks of the progressive nature of Art; shows how it builds one thing upon another, and, by adding to the knowledge of the past the discoveries of the present, elevates itself to a point higher than it has before attained. He tells us that this point is gained by imitation—by following in the footsteps of those that have gone before us: he even advises, though he does so doubtfully, to continue imitation to the end of our career, for he says: “For my own part, I confess I am not only very much disposed to maintain the absolute necessity of imitation in the first stages of the Art, but am of opinion that the study of other masters, which I here call imitation, may be extended throughout our whole lives, without any danger of the inconveniences with which it is charged—of enfeebling the mind, or preventing us from giving that original air which every work undoubtedly ought always to have.” I know what he means: it is, that we should never entirely lose sight of what has been well done: but I cannot go so far with him as to say that the time should

never arrive when we are to feel entirely independent of them. I would rather say, that we should ever preserve the rules derived from them, the mental axioms laid down from the contemplation of them; and thus store up the wine that comes from the fruit whilst we forget the shape of the fruit itself from which it is made. Reynolds has, however, many good arguments in favour of what he asserts, and I may advise the student the well-considering of them before he decides whether they are wholly correct or wholly wrong. That they are wholly wrong it would not become me to say, nor am I inclined to do so. I am certain, in fact, that much which he asserts is correct: for instance, that passage where he says: "A mind enriched by an assemblage of all the treasures of ancient and modern Art will be more elevated and fruitful in resources in proportion to the number of ideas which have been carefully collected and thoroughly digested. There can be no doubt but that he who has the most materials has the greatest means of invention;" and that again where he tells us that "there is no danger of the mind being overburthened with knowledge, or the genius extinguished by any addition of images: on the contrary, these acquisitions may as well, perhaps better, be compared—if comparisons signified anything in reasoning—to the supply of living embers, which will contribute to strengthen the spark that, without the association of more fuel, would have died away." He afterwards tells you that "what is learnt in this manner from the works of others becomes really our own, sinks deep, and is never forgotten; nay, it is by seizing on this clue that we proceed forward, and get further and further in enlarging the principles and improving the practice of our Art:" and afterwards, again: "He that is forming himself must look with great

caution and wariness on those peculiarities, or prominent parts, which at first force themselves upon view, and are the marks, or what is commonly called the manner, by which that individual artist is distinguished." This is the probing which most young imitators require for the cure of their disorder: they copy the peculiarities, the mannerisms of those they follow rather than the excellences which they happened particularly to display. They follow the man rather than his Art, and are unconsciously anxious to tread in his footsteps rather than walk in the same path. Reynolds illustrates this by reference to many old names which exhibit peculiarities of manner that serve as excuses to the learner for this following; and does not hesitate, among others, to mention that of Michael Angelo, of whom he was so great an admirer.

In his lectures he alludes to him as countenancing by his example a deficiency, or rather neglect of colour; but I may add that he serves to countenance an exaggerated twist of attitude which invariably serves to weaken the backbone of the young sculptor-student, and render him incapable of any great effort in his Art ever after.

Sir Joshua afterwards posts up in his lectures a list of those imitators who have plagiarized—plundered is the proper term—other men's ideas and modes of treatment. May I hope that none of those whom I am now addressing will hereafter be found among the number to be added to that list. He afterwards goes on to speak of another kind of imitation in a way that is perhaps more plausible than truthful. I will quote him to you, and you will judge. He tells us: "We come now to speak of another kind of imitation: the borrowing a particular thought, an action, attitude, or figure, and transplant-

ing it into your own work. This will either come under the charge of plagiarism, or be warrantable, and deserve commendation, according to the address with which it is performed. There is some difference, likewise, whether it is upon the ancients or moderns that these depredations are made. It is generally allowed, that no man need be ashamed of copying the ancients: their works are considered as a magazine of common property, always open to the public, whence every man has a right to take what material he pleases; and if he has the art of using them, they are supposed to become to all intents and purposes his own property. The collection of the thoughts of the ancients which Raphael made with so much trouble, is a proof of his opinion on this subject."

Of this I would bid you beware—the more so that I know it is an axiom that has wormed itself gradually into the minds of artists, until it has come to be acknowledged as a legitimate truth, and openly avowed as a right principle in Art: but it is an application to Art of what is false in morals. That Raphael was guilty of it, is no justification of the sin itself, nor of the resorting to it by others. Were I to hear an advocate in a court of law defending a prisoner on this plea, I should say that he was endeavouring to justify his crime by the cleverness with which it was executed, and by the frequency of similar depredations by other parties: such a plea would not, however, be admitted there, nor ought it, I think, to be allowed with us. Where an artist really commits a plagiarism he is always more or less conscious of it, and it invariably displays itself in his work. The error arises, in fact, from his having the original work on his mind whilst carrying out his design, instead of that which he may have seen or conceived from Nature herself. A

grouping of figures, an attitude or expression, may be chosen in a modern production which may afterwards be found by others to be similar to what has been done before; but if taken up without any recollection of the previous one, if drawn, in fact, direct from the fountain of Nature irrespective of any former work in Art, there will always be an original and independent feeling about it that will protect it from the accusation of plagiarism, whether made by a policeman or a critic.

I can imagine that many young students at the outset of their career, seeing as they must the multitude of fine works that have preceded them, the variety of attitudes that have been portrayed, the numerous characters and expressions that have been given, and the many combinations of figures that have been brought together for the purposes of Art, will be scared by the difficulty—almost insurmountable, as it will appear to them—of producing anything truly original: but I can assure them that, notwithstanding all that has been done, whether ancient, mediæval, or modern, Nature, so far from being exhausted for the purposes of imitation, is barely touched by what has been drawn from her up to the present day. The student, though he may feel at first that there is little or nothing left for him, will discover, if closely observant of her, that endless and inexhaustible variety which is in her, but which he was unable, for want of practice, at first to perceive. I have heard that Flaxman, whom I am so fond of setting before you as an example of everything that is good, was frequently seen stopping in the streets and watching the numerous figures and groups that passed before him, engaged in their different occupations; and there is no doubt that many, if not all of the sublime and beautiful combinations he has handed

down to us, were derived from what he stored up in his memory on those occasions.

That he now and then committed plagiarisms can hardly be denied, but it is not upon them that his greatness is founded, but upon what he drew from the original source of Nature in these observant wanderings. He saw and gathered up in his memory what came before him in every-day life, and imbued it with the refinement of his own mind ; thus retaining what he had been the first to observe in Nature, and what was for that reason, strictly speaking, his own, while he again made it still more his own by the impress of his own style which he added to it.

No student in Sculpture or Painting need really imitate the works of Michael Angelo, Raphael, or Flaxman, or indeed any other artist, whilst he has a source so freely open to all as Nature herself : nor need he copy the Antique, though Sir Joshua is pleased to hint that he considers it common property : but what the experience of ages has established as belonging to the Art generally, must neither be neglected or thrown aside. I have read in one of our periodicals an article on Sculpture, the gist of which was, that the reason the Greeks had carried it to such excellence was that they had no Antique to follow, and that they appealed in consequence direct to Nature herself, without any go-between. That it was written by a layman is almost certain, for most if not all our public writers on Art are such ; and I hope it was, for there appears to me a sad want of thought in the assertion : a moment's consideration should have convinced him, that, though literally speaking there was a modicum of truth in what he wrote, the Greeks had in one sense as much their Antique as ourselves. They had not, it is true, in the best time of their Sculpture, been preceded by examples to which



they could refer, in order to raise the style of their own day still higher—and so far they certainly differed from us; but it should have been recollected that they attained their excellence quite as much by schooling as any other nation: the works of their earlier periods were quite as crude as those of any other people, they built upon the discoveries of one another in Art just as much as any others, though with less restriction, for they had no laws, as had the Egyptians, to prevent improvement or negative the peculiar character of the artist's mind. Their progress was made, in short, in the same manner as our own—by gradually retaining that which was found to be applicable to the Art, and by the rejection of what upon trial was found to be objectionable. The one advantage which they had—and it was a great one—was an easier and more frequent reference to Nature in her noblest, most healthy condition, and a less constant contention with Fashion, which seems in our days to have no other object than to distort the human form and render it ridiculous. Sir Joshua himself is very severe in his discourses on this last word, Fashion, as you will find if you read him; though, as you know, he was not a man to throw it entirely aside in his paintings.

I might quote him again on this point, but that I fear I have bored you already too much: I feel warned too to abstain by the lengthy notes with which the edition of his discourses I possess, Burnett's (the best one, I believe, in existence) is overloaded. For myself, I have a detestation of notes, unless, like accessories in Sculpture, they are absolutely necessary to elucidate the text. Generally, however, they are but the maunderings of secondary minds, who hope by hanging on to the skirts of another to obtain for themselves some reflection of his fame.

They seem to me so many dilutings of the original spirit, and as such serve most frequently only to weaken. It may, perhaps, be necessary for the young that such dilution should be resorted to; but too much water spoils the wine. I for one do not like my beverage too weak, and your taste is, I presume, in that respect the same.

My object will have been gained if I have induced you—not to read the book, for that I presume and hope you have done already—but to give it a more earnest attention and study. The gist of my three lectures will be: Employ Reynolds to lay the foundation of the house which you have to build, and let him lay it down as best he likes; he is a good workman, who has had experience in his business; and will make a sound job of it, so that, whatever edifice you may afterwards erect upon it will never sink down, or show cracks in the wall for want of something solid to rest upon. The structure itself may still be your own, and display any fanciful character or any amount of legitimate ornament you may desire.

There is another piece of advice I wish to give you before leaving this evening. Do not fancy, because you are pursuing a particular branch of the Arts, that nothing which you may read is valuable but what refers directly to that department. A sculptor may learn much that will be of service to him by entering into discussions on Painting, just as a painter may gain much by understanding the principles of Sculpture. This is not quite believed in, nor acted up to now, as I fancy it ought to be: but I look to the students of the Royal Academy as the future representatives of a time when more liberal opinions will prevail, and more consideration be given to those who, though travelling in a different channel, are tending to the same end in Art.



### LECTURE XIII.

#### CHANTREY, BEHNES, AND GIBSON.



It is rarely, if ever, that an artist passes through a life of success, whether deserved or undeserved, without leaving behind him an instructive lesson to those who have to follow him and struggle upwards on the same hill-side. Where they that are gone leave Art, they that come after are expected to take it up and to add something of their own, in order to carry it on still further. As the climber gets nearer to the top, the ascent becomes steeper and the difficulty of advancing consequently greater. Our predecessors have not only shown us many things that serve as guides, but have also appropriated to themselves so much that we should like to have put forth as our own, that we may well despair of making our voices heard in that echo of fame that reverberates after we have departed, and which becomes more confused and indistinct as more names are mingled in it; most, if not all, stronger and louder than our own. Yet we may be said in one respect to have had the benefit of the lesson handed down to us, so that our path ought to be the easier, and our arrival at the goal of our ambition the quicker. Such is not the case. Not only have those men, whose career now seems to us so



STATUE OF THE RIGHT REV. DAVID CORRIE,  
BISHOP OF MADRAS.

*H. Weekes, R.A.*



brilliant and yet so easy, taken possession of resting-places on the road which we might have hoped to claim, and even to have contented ourselves with for the remainder of our professional life, but their success has excited so many to follow in the same path, that it is with the utmost difficulty and the most strenuous exertion that we can now get beyond the many pilgrims that are travelling to the same shrine, and so make ourselves conspicuous among the multitude. Sometimes too these great geniuses, whose struggles agitate the stream of Art, leave behind them a residue that renders the pursuing the right road the more difficult. Instead of looking steadily forward to the end, we are apt to be attracted by the brightness of the light that follows them, and so are led astray by an *ignis fatuus* that entices us to our own destruction. By these mistakes too Art itself often retrogrades for a moment, though it eventually re-bounds into its right course.

If not within the memory of students, at least within that of living men, English Sculpture has lost three, who in their day have been the leaders of style and character in Art: Chantrey, Gibson, and Behnes. I do not say that there have not been others of equal talent, and who have borne the brunt of the battle with equal credit to themselves; but these three, whether from the greater genius they possessed, or the fashion that followed them, held for a while the sway, and drew, each for a short period, the style and manner of Sculpture towards themselves. The elder Westmacott, a contemporary of all three, executed many works of great magnitude and considerable public importance—some of them good, some indifferent, and many of them, as is the case with all artists, bad. He was a well-known sculptor of his day, and engrossed much of the then

existing patronage; but what he did left no mark behind. Most, if not all of his works are but weaker editions of what had appeared before, or but poor reflections of better-done things of earlier date. Notwithstanding the immense quantity of marble and bronze he consumed, Sculpture was hardly the better or the worse for him : she would have gone on the same had he never existed.

Baily was a better-educated sculptor, had given more attention in his younger days to study in the Royal Academy, and become in consequence a better manipulator of his clay and a greater master of form. He appears to me an excellent example of how much may be gained by unremitting perseverance, especially in the earlier part of a career, when the foundation has to be laid of all that has to come after. I have heard him say, and I believe he spoke truth, that he had only been absent one night from the Life-school during the whole time when he was admitted to that class in his studentship. I wish I could say the same of some of the sculptor-students of the present day with regard to the same Life-school, now almost deserted by them. So solitary is it, I am sorry to say, as far as they are concerned, that it might without impropriety answer to the description of Hassan's Deserted Hall, which Byron gives in his beautiful poem of "*The Giaour*," and which he finishes by:—

"All is still,  
Save the lattice that flaps when the wind is shrill."

Baily, an earnest pupil of Flaxman, was a more finished modeller than his master, though with less feeling and sentiment, and less power in design. What he gained by the means I have alluded to, was knowledge, not genius, and it carried him a great way: the latter, even his great teacher could not impart

to him, though he obtained under his tuition much that we may designate as purity of style and taste. You may think it strange in me if I say that, notwithstanding he produced one of the most beautiful examples of English ideal Sculpture as yet known to us—his Eve—he was wanting in genius. But his works, while displaying great attention to elegance of form and line, to studied and at the same masterly choice of position, have, generally speaking, but little meaning. The shape of his letters was better than the thoughts they conveyed. I fear, therefore, I must pass him by, and declare that he died and made no sign.

Watson, a less-known man, because he produced less, and for the reason that death put an end to his career—not of the purest kind—before he had time to place his name fully before the public, was again a better sculptor; and yet, after all, only by imitation a lesser Flaxman. His reputation will have to depend on a few slight sketches never carried into execution, here and there a relief or two worked in a soft material that must ere long perish, such as the beautiful composition in front of the building in Threadneedle Street, and two statues at Oxford of Eldon and Stowell, of large size, but not in my opinion sufficient to support a permanent name. The figure of Flaxman by him in the London University, is perhaps his best production, and decidedly an ornament to English Art. Had he lived longer I might have chosen his name to put before you, and he would have afforded you an example both of what to aim at and what to avoid. Macdowell was one of the most refined sculptors of our age, and if he had but received the encouragement due to him—for some reason or other denied—would undoubtedly have left his mark. His style and manner is indeed still visible in our exhibitions, but he has died too



recently to be criticized, has not yet passed through that period after death necessary in all cases to go by, before properly determining our just weight and after value. It is in it that the veil is lifted from all who enter the Temple of Fame. From some who are supposed to have received more praise than they ought during life, it is snatched with a rude grasp ; from others who have not, as it is thought, had their share, it is raised with a more tender touch. As it is we will take the three I have mentioned, and endeavour to draw from them a lesson serviceable to our Art. What that lesson will be, whether of benefit or otherwise, does not wholly depend on the examples selected. It depends in part on the capability of the student himself of reading it correctly. Whether he is able to utter the sentences rightly, and to place the proper pronunciation and emphasis on each ; whether he has judgment enough to lay no undue stress on those parts which are comparatively unimportant, and to give their due value to those which tell most to the moral or character of the whole when summed up. Of the three, I propose to take Chantrey first ; or rather to put him in comparison with the second, Behnes, whom, though widely differing from in some respects, he greatly resembled in Art. Both had original genius, displayed principally in the same walk, portraiture, and partly because that walk is most recognized in this country, both left behind them what we call a school ; and it is this indeed that shows me how much more powerful they were in their day than the other names I have mentioned, and has induced me to set them before you.

If that of the lesser man, Behnes, has lasted longer than that of the greater, it will show that there was quite as much, if not more natural vigour in him than in the one so reverently looked

up to in life. His strength in Art, however, suffered from a canker at the root which prevented it from developing itself in full. I must premise my remarks by saying that my office here is not to give a biographical history, nor indeed to touch upon the personal character of either; at least only so far as it affected their works.

Where they were born, or how they died—subjects that might call for much reflection, and out of which good might be drawn—are no business of mine while speaking to you from this desk, though my acquaintance with them would serve me well in both instances, were I inclined to speak on those points. It devolves upon me, however, to depict to you the two men, widely apart in many points, yet alike in some, and now standing side by side on pedestals of almost equal height, that you may see how in each case the peculiarities in character told in their Art, sometimes for good and sometimes for the reverse: and the setting forth these involves to a certain extent the alluding to circumstances connected with their history. The most successful one, Chantrey, lost his father when young, and so was early in life thrown upon his own resources, and this served to invigorate him for the trials he had afterwards to undergo, and the exertions he had to make: while the less successful one, Behnes, had to support a father, himself lost; and to inherit, perhaps from him, much that told in no degree to his good—on the contrary, held an evil sway over him all through his career, and at the last completely overpowered him. The one, much to his credit, had to start in life from nothing, and managed to work his way upwards, gaining both riches and fame as he went along. The other may be said to have begun from less than nothing, for he had to retrace the backward path

his parents had made before him. Both commenced their calling as workers in wood—though in a different branch—Chantrey as a wood-carver in decorative or furniture Art, not then in a very high state in this country; and the manner that belonged to that kind of work, stuck to him ever after, for it may be seen to his latest period in the carving of the hair of his busts, and were I inclined to be ill-natured I might add in the crinkling of his draperies. Behnes had to labour at the same material in another way: he had to follow the *métier* of his father, pianoforte-making, and to practise in it for his own livelihood even after his first attempts in Fine Art had been made. And it did not affect the style of what he afterwards belonged to—for there was no connection between the two—but it so trained his hand that it converted the ingenious mechanic, when under a higher inspiration, into the skilful and tasty carver. His fingers had attained their dexterity even before the brain had turned them to their destined use. His busts, well conceived, exhibit at the same time the very best execution: execution swayed by taste and carried out to the highest point, yet never ostentatiously intruding itself beyond its proper place.

I do not mean to tell you that both took orders as priests of Art at the same moment—you know otherwise; but they were near enough for comparison. Both were in the beginning unread men, and in one sense of the word both continued so to the end of their days. Chantrey knew but little of the inside of books, though he assumed the appearance of knowing by an amply supplied library; but he educated himself by intercourse with men of the highest stamp of intellect: and if he could not read, or did not care to read any of the dead languages, learnt

early to read the living tongues about him, and to understand the idioms used in conveying their meaning. He was a shrewd man, never at a loss for an original observation on any subject whatever, and these observations were always, like his Art, of a practical, matter-of-fact kind, the result, like his Art again, of judgment rather than imagination, though somewhat limited in their comprehensiveness of grasp. He had the faculty of suiting his conversation to the capacities of those with whom he came in contact, and his personal appearance and mode of delivering his opinions, both in themselves impressive, gave those opinions more weight perhaps than they were entitled to; so that while some were content to receive what he said, others who saw further ahead, were silent, caring little to contradict. He generally, however, was less anxious about the soundness of the doctrine he preached than about the effect it produced on his hearers, and it was rarely that he did not impress them with the profundity of his judgment. By these means he advanced himself, making many friends and rarely losing any. I am not endeavouring to bring before you a perfect being, but a true man of the world, who knew how to play his cards, to make all his trumps tell, and even his lesser ones help to the winning of the game. We are none of us everything that we might be : wings do not grow out of any of our shoulders, nor would they have grown out of Chantrey's had he lived even to the present day. Darwin's theory of Progression has yet to be carried out on that point.

The other, Behnes, neither knew nor pretended to know anything except what referred directly or indirectly to the Art he was pursuing, and what he could master by ingenuity of hand rather than by mental study. He was early in life an

accomplished, though not a profound man—an active, energetic worker, though not a deep thinker ; one who could turn his hand to anything at a moment, and succeed by his dexterity in the use of the implements he worked with. Impulse served him where quiet study and cool consideration were the friends of others. He became, thus constituted, an ardent student in the Academy, gaining medals, and, even when failing to do so, losing no courage, but repeating his efforts again and again. You will say that this is a contradiction to what I have just told you, but it is not : it was a succession of spasmodic impulses that required constant changes for excitement, but knew no connecting link one with another. His nerves of sensation seemed to run from his fingers to his brain rather than from his brain to his fingers, and thus, while he became one of the most rapid and ingenious modellers in our Academy, he gave at that time but little real promise of anything of permanent value even in his calling. Brought up in his boyhood in almost abject misery, he determined if possible to rise above it ; but he cared little about the means to be used, or about the effect those means would have when more forward on his way. He stepped from one stone to another, as they presented themselves to him ; taking no pains to select before starting any one as the safest, or as leading most directly to the end, and he thus found himself, when scarcely half way over, in the middle of a torrent that surrounded him on all sides and eventually overwhelmed him. His personal appearance, when young and handsome, and the energetic character that seemed to belong to him—indeed in one sense of the word did belong to him—procured him many friends, hardly one of whom he kept three days after their first knocking at his door. They felt they

had been made unfair use of, and left. Here, I think, we perceive the first divergence one from another of the two men. Chantrey keeping always his eye on the road before him, Behnes fancying he was advancing whenever he moved, or whichever way his steps might happen to direct themselves. We see them both at slightly different periods, in different ways, students of Art, and both taking for a time to portrait painting for support, Chantrey adding landscape sketching to it, but as far as we can judge with very moderate success; Behnes exhibiting considerable talent and even genius—enough, in fact, to cause him to be appreciated in these young days, and to help him to live, and contend with many difficulties. Both eventually turning to Sculpture as the then (speaking from the pocket) most profitable branch of the profession. Frequent attendance as a student in our schools and a certain aptitude he had gained in portrait as well as other kinds of drawing, made Behnes ever after the best manipulator of surface of the two, when that aptitude was applied to a new material, though both were good in that respect.

His heads—I must speak of them first—have greater freedom of handling, less mannerism, more variety, and greater difference of character than those of Chantrey. In all these points, in fact, they are truer to Nature; but they have not that high, gentlemanly dignity, nor indeed, in some instances, the power of his rival. We do not hear at all of Chantrey as a student in our schools. He was probably then, as he was ever after, self-dependent in his Art as in other things. He seems not to have cared for Academy teaching, if one may judge from his practice and not his talk, and for this reason his figures have less anatomical knowledge, less acquaintance with the movements of

the human frame than those of many men vastly inferior to him. But he knew that he had something in him belonging peculiarly to himself, which only required perseverance to bring out, and he looked for the means of bringing it out on things about him, and on the men who had succeeded before him in the same line. The model on which he began his bust-making was Nollekens, of whom he seemed fond, and the pecuniary profit attached to this walk of Art did not escape him. He did not pretend to throw aside with affected disdain that view of the subject, for he was a man of judgment, not imagination, and therefore built no castles in the air. He had the good sense to perceive the superiority of the natural treatment of his old friend Nollekens over the stagey style of those who immediately preceded him, Carlini and Bacon for instance, and was perhaps led on by a certain amount of gratitude he felt for kindness received from the eccentric old miser. In the beginning he followed in his track, but he soon after added to it that power of expression and strong emphasis of character which so mark his works from those of every one else. His steadiness of purpose, his mingling with none but men of intellect, the faculty he possessed of gaining something from every one whom he met, his active, industrious habits, and his bodily as well as mental energy now began to tell, not only on his success in life, but also on the quality of the Art he sent forth. They were things that every one felt as belonging to high life, and high life only, and may be described as possessing strong individuality though not physical beauty. His male heads are fine, his female ones in no way remarkable ; a certain roughness of character in the man entered into the feeling of his Art, and so rendered him unfit for that tenderness of treatment required in the repre-

sentation of female beauty. He knew, in short, that he was defective here, and as far as possible avoided the doing of them. They in consequence are few in number ; that of Mrs. Somerville is one of the best, but it is intellectual, not physical beauty that serves him there, and association of ideas with that scientific lady helps him to a charm which by itself the bust hardly possesses.

In this walk Behnes was decidedly the best of the two ; as indeed he was again in children, whose engaging simplicity he portrayed with a success rarely equalled in English Sculpture. His female busts have a beauty not easily surpassed ; some, if not all, would do well to study from, whether for delicacy of expression, refinement of treatment, or even in such minor matters as the arrangement and modelling of the hair and drapery. They have all the freedom of the Painter with the necessary severity of style that belongs to the Sculptor, though the latter does not require to be carried to such an extent in portraiture as in ideal Art. But some, alas ! are tainted by the vice of the artist ; and this tarnish, bad enough in ideal works, becomes doubly and trebly so in portraiture. From the work you will know the worker : so it was then, is now, and ever will be the same.

One of the objects of my lecture this evening, is to show you how much innate character in the man affects that of his work. Some hints have now been given you of the weaknesses of Behnes, that you might see how they told in his case ; and how, with perhaps more genius than Chantrey, he was, owing to those weaknesses, less of an artist as well as less of a man. I must qualify this, however, by saying that the word genius is one of very comprehensive meaning : it is so at least to me, and I must



take it as such in this instance. Usually speaking, it implies the power of creating something new and original, different as well as beyond what has been accomplished before. When connected with Literature or Art, it suggests high imaginary power, and the putting things before us in a fresh light, and in one that incites high thoughts within us. It may, however, without impropriety, be made to imply judgment as well as imagination; and the faculty of arranging things so that, while their appeal shall be forcible, they shall in no way offend, or go beyond the requirements the subject may call for. It was so in the case of Sir Joshua, and no one now doubts his genius. Whether judgment is more valuable in Sculpture than imagination I will not take upon myself to decide: the solution of the question depends in part on the nature of the calls made upon the Art outside. Both must be used in any case if a great work is to be sent forth, or a great artist succeed in making himself appreciated. Judgment will travel a long distance by itself, though it may not go the whole way; but imagination without it may literally be termed madness. Chantrey had good judgment and little imagination, so that with him the latter was always strictly under the power of the former, and in his case, if it prevented him from soaring into the higher regions of his profession, it prevented him also from making many mistakes which would have ruined his works. If you do not always approve of what he does, you are rarely, if ever, offended with him. Propriety, I am aware, is poor praise in Sculpture, but it is better than absurdity. I do not say he had no imagination, for he had just enough to render his portrait-statues not too literal, and no more. He believed in the word "treatment," as every sculptor should, in my opinion, let him touch on what he will, whether

portrait or ideal. In some instances pathos characterized with charming effect his works, but it was the exception rather than the rule, for the general tone of what he did was of a more solid, dignified kind, and I believe he was indebted to other artists for the presence of it. He was cautious not to introduce in them what was wholly unconnected with them, either as regards costume or otherwise ; and he was cautious, too, not to introduce what was offensive to good taste. The same in other things : cautious not to offend by the expression of any opinion that would make enemies, or impede in any way his influence in the world of Art. No one knew what were his politics : as far as one could tell he was an ultra Liberal, for he was of all parties ;— at any rate, he was too wise to speak openly on that subject at any time. His advice that artists should abstain from interfering in them was a good one, and he is not the first of that opinion. One of the points in which he excelled was the giving an evasive answer to questions relating to them ; by which he avoided committing himself in any way. When asked whether he was a reformer, he would reply by another question, “ Who is not now ? ” When asked at table by the Duke of Sussex whether he was an Episcopalian or Presbyterian, his answer was, “ Your Royal Highness, I am a Derbyshire man.”

One of his finest busts, done in early life, was that of Horne-Took, remarkable for the originality of its arrangement, its strong individuality, powerful expression, and great breadth of treatment ; so remarkable was it, that it established at once Chantrey's name as a bust-modeller, and procured for him some thousand pounds worth of commissions. He was fond of relating an anecdote in connection with it which strongly illustrates what I have said. He would tell his visitors when in one

of his genial moods, that Horne-Took, when sitting for it, was ill on his sofa, and that on its being finished the old man rose up, and with a very earnest face, shaking at the same time his fist at him by way of impressing him with the importance of what he was saying, exclaimed, "Now, Chantrey, you have modelled a bust of me, and a bust of Sir Francis Burdett ; and you must model at least half-a-dozen of the other party, or you are ——." Excuse my repeating a word that I never use away from home. This anecdote he always finished by saying it was a piece of advice he never forgot.

The public felt, on the bust being exhibited, that an artist had arisen who took an original, and at the same time common-sense view of portraiture: who could give the inward mental character of those who sat to him, and portray them as men of the age in which they lived ;—could, in short, bring together the modern type of face and good Art, and make them both agree. They recognized the outward forms he gave of their friends, as representing faithfully the inward feelings with which they had associated them, and were satisfied with the result. I have told you that this bust gained for him immense orders : it did more ; it procured for him tip-top men as sitters, men who had risen in life by their talent, or who held a high position from birth or other associations. By intercourse with them he educated himself, so to speak, in the ways of the world, and they served him at the same time as the best models in his Art. This will, perhaps, account to you for what I have said about the aristocratic character of his heads ; for there is always strength in a clever man's, if you know how to look for it ; but it will account for it only in part. I consider Chantrey to have scarcely more than one expression in his busts, but it was a good one, and he

could fit it well to every face. It was in truth, the expression of his own face—luckily for him handsome, refined in feature, and rich in its modelling, as was that of his busts. There is something—nay more, there is a great deal—in all he has done of Chantrey himself: not an uncommon thing with Artists, and luckily for him, in his case it told on the right side.

Chantrey, notwithstanding what I have said, never did anything that the world could lay hold of as unbecoming; he was too clever for that, and knew that whatever he might gain at the moment, he would lose in the end. His game was the old-fashioned one, long whist, where there are more points than in the short one, now the fashion.

You will fancy I have been ill-natured in my setting up of the man before you, but if you think awhile you will find I am not. The world easily forgives this kind of thing; it offends no one, and when under proper regulation and covered by the canopy of success, leads to admiration, and with some even to respect. My description, like a child's puzzle, may present many awkward shapes when the pieces are separate, but when put together may show forth a picture not altogether unpleasant to the eye nor out of harmony with nature. Like all careful men, Chantrey was very sensitive, or touchy as it is called, on any joke uttered on his productions, and I would, without any joke, advise the students to be the same. Satire, though an unfair weapon, is a most fatal one, and when once it attaches itself to a work of Art, especially a serious one, never leaves it, and it often creeps in through crevices never dreamt of by the artist.

You all know the story of the great Napoleon shutting up Canova's statue of himself with the winged Victory in its hand,

on the Frenchman exclaiming "that Victory was flying away from him." It is said to have arrived in Paris when the fortunes of the Emperor were on the turn, and he was too well aware of the bad effect such a *jeu d'esprit* would have, to allow the figure to be seen.

There are many such things flying about. I remember when modelling, in company with Chantrey, on the colossal equestrian statue of George IV., now in Trafalgar Square—not one of his best efforts—he was engaged draping the left arm that holds the baton, and was trying to make it what at the moment he considered classical by keeping the folds close to the skin, and the sleeve short at the wrist. I saw plainly it would not do; but he persisted awhile in this manner of treatment, though I twice expressed my disapproval of it. At last, knowing how much he dreaded a joke, from his having in other instances felt the galling effect of one or two, I asked if he would like me to tell him what would be thought of it, and, on his assenting, told him they would say that "Chantrey's big figure had outgrown his clothes." "Will they, by Jupiter! Better you say it than the public," was his answer; and down came the sleeve at once to its proper length, and the whole treatment of the arm was changed.

I have hitherto spoken principally of the busts of these two sculptors, Chantrey and Behnes, in both cases fine; so fine, in my opinion, that I doubt much, were the best examples of them brought together, if we should be able to produce any others at all equal to them. Roubiliac alone is entitled to stand as their *confrère* in this department. Surely they must be of some value to the student in portrait-sculpture. Young men are apt to imagine that what is done now is, from its containing some

new feature in style or manner, superior to former work ; while old men like myself are prone to think that everything done in previous times is better than that of the present day. Both are errors not easy to avoid. I must trust to your keeping yourself as far as possible clear of the first one now, and hope you will live long enough to meet the second, and contend against it with equal success. If you can do this, you will always keep your minds clear for any new impressions that may present themselves, and your progress in Art will be the better.

Chantrey's original models, immense in number, and carefully preserved during his long consistent life, may now be seen collected at Oxford, and the student, if he can read, may gain an insight into their character, and at the same time help himself in his Art. Behnes' are, for reasons unpleasant to think about and scarcely to be alluded to in a lecture of this kind, nowhere, scattered to the winds ; to be found only one by one, here and there, in the by-alleys of Art, or in the studios of inferior sculptors : another effect of the difference between the two men, and another lesson that may be learnt from that difference both by professor and student. Yet if by chance one should be alighted upon, it would be well for the student to obtain it, if possible, as it would be worth something to him as an example of truth of character if a male head, of elegance if a female one, and in either case of what is called freedom of touch in Art. His hair is always good, more like nature, better than Chantrey's ; his draperies not so true, yet always more subdued so as to take their proper place, that is to say, a secondary one, amid the whole. In this last respect they are in fact superior.

I must now proceed to that period in the life of each, when,

having to a certain extent established a reputation, they were receiving larger commissions and undertaking larger works. Chantrey was the first, and when he had come to this point he had also gained another. If not exactly at that time rich, he had by prudence so regulated his monetary matters that he need no longer feel anxiety about them. His head was clear, his mind at ease, so that he could devote himself undisturbed to what was offered to him in his Art. He had too, by the steady method he had adopted, traced out the road he was to go, so that he could see, not only what was before him, but over how much ground he had gone already. By this time he had taught himself where lay his strength, and where his weaknesses. He knew himself, as well as it is known now, that he was capable of representing individuality correctly, and of combining it with dignity and elegance by appropriate treatment; and he knew also that he was incapable of mastering those abstract forms which constitute the ideal.

From the road thus marked out for himself he was hardly ever known to swerve, though temptations were now and then put before him to do so. The late Lord Egremont gave him a commission for a statue of Satan addressing the Sun, to be a companion to the group by Flaxman of Michael and Satan, now at Petworth. Chantrey made an effort to please the old Earl, but it never went further than a half-size model of the figure and a full-size study of the head. Both are now destroyed. A stumpy Satan with bow legs, and a stomach showing outward signs of being with good fat capon lined; and a head as ugly or uglier, though in a different way, than the Sin whom the Arch-fiend met at the gates of Hell, were but poor representations in Art of Milton's fallen angel. George IV.,

when Regent, proposed to him that he should execute a Venus of the kind Canova's genius was so fond of, but nothing came of the order beyond a sepia sketch or two on paper. The Duke of Bedford commissioned him for the only ideal work he ever carried through, and this he was induced to undertake more to oblige his Grace than for any love or feeling for the kind of thing. The Parting of Hector and Andromache, and Penelope weeping over the bow of Ulysses, are alto-reliefs well carved, carefully executed, but wanting entirely in either heroic character or pathos. These are all the attempts he ever made at the ideal, and we may pass them by. He is, nevertheless, a great sculptor, though not now perhaps looked up to as I think he ought to be.

I will turn to what he excelled in. The sculptor of the statues of Washington, Grattan, and James Watt need, I think, never fear oblivion: I am too polite to say they have never been excelled, but I may say they have rarely been equalled. The self-concentrated power and calm dignity of the founder of a great nation and a great system of government, pervade the first, in the expression of the head, in the standing of the figure, and even in the folding of the drapery which so envelopes it as to shut out all thought of equality or familiar intercourse with the spectator. You look with reverence upon it as you would upon the real man, who gave the noble example of consistency and self-sacrifice by resigning his presidency in order to carry out the principles he had first laid down. The one of Grattan, short in its proportions as was the man himself, glows with wild Irish eloquence; every limb is agitated by the persuasive words he is uttering, even his hair is moved by his energy and carries you with him *volens volens* in his argument.



The statue is the Demosthenes of modern Art. It is the only one Chantrey executed representing strong action, and one of his best ; though I am ready to acknowledge it as a thing that should be done but once in a sculptor's life. The calculating Watt—I am speaking of the smaller, not the colossal one—in Westminster Abbey, sits contemplating every movement in his wonderful invention, and considering their effect one upon another, though perhaps not yet comprehending the immense change it was to create throughout the world. This statue is exactly the opposite of the last mentioned—quiet, contemplative, busy within itself, and totally unconscious of what is going on about it. It is, in short, a truthful representation of a mathematical man, engaged in bringing together the many points of his problem, and harmonizing them all to one purpose. You will not be content with me if I do not say that the drapery or dress is simple and at the same time graceful, such as the original may have worn, and such as good Art recognizes.

By the time Behnes had come to the same point, he was tossing about in a sea of trouble, and beating the waves with his hands like a drowning man. His ill-regulated life was beginning to tell upon him ; old age was seen coming in the distance, and, as he must have apprehended, without that which should have accompanied it, as honour, love, obedience, and troops of friends : but in their stead, curses in the shape of increasing debts, growing vices, and cold looks from those around him. The vivid impulses, which served him in his busts, hardly helped him in works that required longer and more mature consideration. His statues, with the exception of two, Dr. Babington in St. Paul's Cathedral, and Sir William Follett in Westminster Abbey, are bad—bad not from want of

technical knowledge, but from the want of the power of concentrating his mind for any length of time on one thing. They were the result of stray but tired moments; when he could escape from the effects of his harassing life. Great works in Sculpture are rarely if ever done after this fashion. His talent, however, still shone forth by fits and starts in lesser efforts; his beautiful statuette of Lady Godiva, for instance, though they were but the momentary flashes that indicated the expiring flame.

Was I wrong in asserting that Chantrey had less original genius than Behnes? I begin to think I was. He was more consistent, less eccentric. Why should eccentricity be always put down as a necessary attribute in Genius? It was not so in the best days of Art, though it may have been in her less prosperous ones. Chantrey was a man of the world, made every move tell, and hardly lost a pawn in the game of life: there is Genius even in that. Behnes was not; his Genius was a sort of Mephistopheles, always by his side, allowing him always to fancy he was going as he pleased, yet eventually leading him to destruction.

You will ask me where all this while is Gibson? I will tell you. He is in Rome, the centre of a system in that heaven of Art, far removed from, and having very little communication with ours. He rarely corresponds, and when he does seems but little concerned about what is going on now, or is thought of him here. He prefers being the echo of old Greek Art to the uttering of new sounds that will interest the present day. Echoes are always weaker than the original voice. His works are good in their forms, well studied and academically correct: purer in style, and freer from affectation than those of his master

Canova. No sculptor shows better the good effect of schooling, followed by thorough devotion to Art. Some few friends who pretend to a love of the classical, hang to him : and from this circumstance he has some influence, though he can hardly be said to have left a school behind him. The one to which he belongs had been established long before he was born. His works, though in many respects very beautiful, remind me of an old acquaintance of mine, who, when some of the remains of yesterday's dinner were brought again to table as a *réchauffé*, used always to exclaim, somewhat to the annoyance of his wife, "I think I have seen you, friend, before."

What can the student in Sculpture gain by contemplating the career of these three men? He surely may learn by that of Chantrey how much may be accomplished by sound thinking and steady perseverance, and above all by early self-knowledge. The man who would rise in his profession may be taught by him, how necessary it is as soon as possible to mark out for himself the walk in Art most adapted to his own powers, and how necessary it is to keep to that walk when once he has found it to be the right one. We are apt to fancy when starting in the race, that we shall come in at the head of all, leaving our *confrères*, to use a sporting term, nowhere ; but as we get on we begin to find that everyone has his place : one excels in what another fails in, and yet is in some respects less than the man he surpasses, and that the state of Art is shown to advance or recede, not by the single effort of anyone, but by the combination of all. The meaning of the word Chantrey in Art, is consistency of purpose.

Of Behnes I need scarcely speak : the lesson he leaves must be obvious to all. I may say, however, that but for certain ifs,

he might have been one of the first sculptors of England. Whether those ifs were born within him, or whether he had the power to contend with them it is not for me to judge : to advise you to avoid them would be to insult you. He will not in the long run take a high rank in Art, but he has left behind him things which you as students may find benefit from. Eat the kernel, and throw away the shell.

Gibson was a sculptor of great talent, I do not say genius ; but if you have the latter—and that is a question none of you can quite decide for yourselves—you will be the better for pursuing the line he followed, intense study and earnest devotion to his Art. If you have only talent you will go further, much further by it than by any other road ; but he may, I think, serve you as a warning that your Art is called upon to illustrate new ideas, not repeat old ones ; to associate itself with the feelings of the present day, not to carry us back to times of the past, and to things that are dead and gone.





#### LECTURE XIV.

### THE EARLY HISTORY OF SCULPTURE.



I PROPOSE, during my next five lectures, to worry or weary you—the words sound remarkably alike—with the early history of Sculpture ; a subject often taken up by lecturers and persons with very little practical knowledge of the Art. I do not say that it is one with which the student must inevitably be well acquainted ; but I think some insight into it will be found of service to him, as a help in distinguishing, among the many changes of feeling that are constantly going on, those that tend to advance, from those that are detrimental to Art, or have no effect either for good or evil. Like the Painter who sees the whole scope of his canvas and understands what is the main intention of his work, the learner in Art history will comprehend the relative value of each touch, and not unduly emphasize what he is over partial to, so as to destroy the harmony of the whole. He will in short, by a knowledge of what has gone before, be prevented from listening too closely to the tempter who stands immediately by his side, is in fact his own shadow, and be able better to look into that futurity by whose verdict he himself must hereafter stand or fall.

What I shall put before you, which will relate to the earlier part only of the subject, I must ask you to take merely as a sketch, very imperfect in itself, to be studied and carried out in detail at a more opportune moment. Could I indeed depend on the result of time, I should have preferred delaying my treatise, and then giving you a more duly considered whole, but that I cannot. The death, too, during the past year of Mr. Foley, perhaps the greatest sculptor England has produced, a loss which we all deplore, has warned me of the uncertainty of events. I have found besides, on entering into the subject, such a multitude of circumstances recorded, each perhaps in itself unimportant, but all, when put together, assisting to clear away the mists from the early dawn of Art, that the subject has become almost too great for me to handle, or at any rate too voluminous to be grappled with in the short time I have been able amidst other occupations, to devote to it. If I appear to you in my lecture to diverge into matters that have but distant relationship with Sculpture, you must give me credit, in that too, for a wish to be of use. They all radiate in various directions from the main centre ; and I am not without hope may in some degree be of benefit by enabling you to perceive how much of the beautiful surrounds your Art, or accompanies it in that constellation of the mind, of which it is one of the brightest stars. I can but give you my thoughts, and you must take them as they are.

There is, I am sorry to say, but little practical instruction in Sculpture in the Royal Academy ; less in fact than ever, and but little can be gained from lectures unassisted by more direct teaching in the schools. The only object a lecturer can accomplish is to enlarge the mind of the learner generally so

that he may take in more freely the advice given him, when his clay or marble is before him.

I am aware that my audience consists quite as much of Painters as of Sculptors, so that what I allude to may, if of service at all, help those who are working in other departments as well as those whom I am particularly called upon to address.

My intention is to be guided by authors who give, as near as possible, contemporary evidence. I will begin with Homer, the earliest, or, if not, with Hesiod, one of the earliest writers known. Dates have now but little concern with him. Herodotus, who lived in the fifth century B.C., places him four hundred years earlier than his own time, of course by a wild guess only : how could it be otherwise ?

Egypt and Greece have both contended for the honour of his birth, though neither of them have been able to name the spot where he first drew breath. He is lost in the waters of oblivion, all but his voice, but that we still hear floating in a hymn to glory on the waves of time, and echoed through many tongues, all awakened by the music of his song, and all imbued more or less with the patriotic sentiments he inspires.

The old poet touches but slightly in his "*Iliad*" and "*Odyssey*" on the fine Arts. Allusions to scenes of peace and happy days long past, are introduced amid the turmoil of the fight, that give a special and separate interest to each hero as he falls on the field of battle, and impart pathos to events which otherwise would appear but wanton cruelty and barbarous destruction. This is the poet's own art, by which he makes his impress on the mind, and this it is that renders Homer so great, but the visible figures of the Arts assume no very definite shape amid the grandeur of his figures of speech ; and the warlike implements

only shine forth in momentary flashes of light, amidst the struggles of contending nations which he describes.

Sculpture is but little thought of by the blind old bard, but every hero he portrays is in himself a living statue replete with beauty, yet marked with a character distinct and complete in itself. Had I the voice of Orpheus to bring them back from the shades below, with what a martial tread would they come before us on our diminutive stage—with what a clanging of arms and nodding of plumes from their lofty brows! Old Nestor, at the head of the group, lecturing the younger warriors of his day: yet, like some other lecturers, somewhat prosy in his ideas; Agamemnon, with his kingly pride, brave in the fight, yet looking for an undue share of the spoils; Achilles, fierce and impetuous, yet, amid all his impetuosity, sullen and unforgiving in his temper, and, like most good haters, a fervent friend:

“ Our lost Patroclus, with his gentle courtesy ;  
How kind and genial was his soul to all  
While yet he lived ;”

the giant Ajax, with his ponderous strength, cruel from the absence of any of the higher feelings of the hero; Ulysses, with more of the general and as much of the soldier, and a wisdom that taught him the strategy as well as the hardihood of war. Each of them differing in character, yet perfect in physical beauty, except Thersites, who serves by contrast to heighten the beauty of the rest, and who might plead as an excuse for the cynical deformity of his mind, that Jove had created the bitterness within when he created the deformity of his body.

On the other side, grey-bearded old Priam, with his many



wives and many sorrows, the Lear of Homer ; with his son Paris, in part selfish, and not wholly brave, unwilling in the hour of trouble to sacrifice his own pleasure, though eager that others should sacrifice theirs for him, whose beauty formed the weakness of his character and made him less than the rest. Last, not least, the true, if not the nominal hero of the tale, Hector, who combines the gentleman, the patriot, the soldier, the loving husband and kind father ; who bore almost alone the brunt of the battle and suffered the misfortunes of war, and who never lowered his crest except to pacify the fears of a timid child. We may ask him to come more forward to the footlights and receive our homage, for, whatever may be our disposition, our sympathies will be always with him, as the grandest figure our imagination can call up before us. The sculptor will acknowledge, I think, before I dismiss him with my wand, that he is the greatest of them all, and presents to us the highest beauty, both mental and physical, our mind can conceive or our Art portray.

And now, as they vanish into air, I may tell you that it is to show how the Poetry and the Sculpture of the ancients combined together to produce the sublime and the beautiful, the perfection of physical form and mental excellence. It was this feeling that made their Art so great, and if it ever rise again to the same height, it must be by pursuing the path that leads to the same point.

Notwithstanding what I have said on Homer's comparative silence on the subject of Art, the reader, if he be attentive in his observations, may find, amid the old man's magnificent metaphors and similes, some dim allusions to it, as it existed in his day. For instance, in the third book of the Iliad, where

Iris is supposed to discover Helen engaged on her tapestry work. I shall quote from Pope's translation, though some apology is due for taking him as the translator, since we have undoubtedly a more literal one in the late Lord Derby. Lord Derby, however, himself acknowledges, in the preface to his work, that the English reader unacquainted with Greek will naturally prefer the harmonious versification and polished brilliancy of Pope's; but with the kind of justice characteristic of a truly great man, who gives all the credit due to his rival, yet barely acknowledges that which is due to himself, adds, "admirable as it is, Pope's *Iliad* can hardly be said to be Homer's *Iliad*." Lord Derby is right, too, where he says that if justice is ever to be done to Homer, it can only be in the heroic blank verse. On more mature consideration, indeed, the student will gradually come to prefer Lord Derby's to the other, and will find that what he loses in euphony, he gains in simplicity of style and condensity of expression, and so approaches nearer to the Greek original. The one translation is the work of the poet, the other of the scholar; and both may be read with advantage. But the lover of Homer will have to take Lord Derby's, if, without the benefit of a classical education, he wishes to get, as far as possible, an insight into the power of his writings.

I will endeavour to show the difference between the two by their respective translations of one and the same line, where that difference appears to me strongly exemplified. Pope, speaking of Juno—a lady I do not recommend to the students for a wife—construes the line,

"Then thus the goddess with the radiant eyes,  
What words are these, O sovereign of the skies?"

While Lord Derby translates it—

“Whom answer’d thus the stag-eyed Queen of Heaven,  
What words, dread son of Saturn, dost thou speak?”

The chief difference between the two appears to me to lie in the use of the term “radiant” in one case, and “stag-eyed” in the other. In some instances Pope varies his translation of this same term by “large,” “majestic,” “charming,” &c.; but with him the simile is lost for the sake of melody, as in our operas the sense is buried in the luxury of sound; while Lord Derby preserves all through the expression of his author by “stag-eyed,” and so not only imitates him, but keeps alive the metaphor, which is so powerful in itself, and so characteristic of him. In Book XX. is another rendering of a like kind, which again illustrates the same difference between the two translators. The Greek word is γαίησχος, a term applied more than once to Neptune. Pope gives it by “Whose azure round girds the vast world,” and afterwards by “shakes the solid ground;” while Lord Derby invariably uses the term “earth-shaker,” as near as possible the literal translation of it. There is, however, a licence in this case either may take advantage of, as γαίησχος means encircling as well; but I cannot help fancying that “earth-shaker,” though not so harmonious in sound as Pope’s rendering, is nearer to the Homeric feeling; especially when speaking of the Pagan deities, who were rather a turbulent lot, and more particularly so the old salt Ποσειδών.

In these remarks of mine there may not impossibly be found something applicable to Art as well as to Poetry. Neither smooth language nor flowing lines are at all times the main object or purpose of a work, though they may frequently help it; they will, in fact, often, as in this case, tend to weaken it,

and so be out of place. The student will find, whatever the two versifications may be, the substance in both sufficiently alike for our present purpose, which is, not to criticize the style of either the original writings of Homer or the translations of them, but to seek out in them such allusions to Art as may serve to illustrate its early history. I must, therefore, ask pardon for this divergence from our subject, and give, as I promised, from Pope the lines alluded to, which tend to show that the working of tapestry was an employment prevalent among females in Homer's time.

“Meantime to beauteous Helen from the skies  
The various goddess of the rainbow flies,  
Like fair Laodice in form and face,  
The loveliest nymph of Priam's royal race ;  
Her in the palace at her loom she found,  
The golden web her own sad story crown'd.  
The Trojan wars she weaved (herself the prize),  
And the dire triumphs of her fatal eyes.”

Homer appears again to touch on Art in his fourth book, where he describes the wound of Atrides, from the arrow of Pandorus, with the blood flowing from it, and says (this time too I quote from Pope) :—

“The folds it pierced, the plaited linen tore,  
And raised the skin, and drew the purple gore ;  
As when some stately trappings are decreed  
To grace a monarch on his bounding steed,  
A nymph in Caria or Moenia bred,  
Stains the pure iv'ry with the lively red,  
With equal lustre various colours vie  
The shining whiteness, and the Tyrian dye.”

We may gather from the last—for similes must always be founded on fact, or they tell for nothing—that the trappings of

their horses, or rather the cheek-pieces, as Lord Derby gives it, were decorated with ivory, and that, for the sake of beauty, that ivory was stained in various ways.

We may infer too that Caria, *id est* Lydia, and Moenia, represent places famous for the manufacturing and decorating these trappings; and by going a step further gather an opinion that women were chiefly, if not wholly, employed upon them.

We may in the same way imply from the former lines, that the working of tapestry coats of many colours—not perhaps all worn by Josephs—was one of the chief employments on which females were engaged, and when we repeat the lines,

“ The Trojan wars she weaved (herself the prize),  
And the dire triumphs of her fatal eyes,”

may only be doing them justice in asserting that they were the designers as well as the workers of these varied productions; though I fear this last assumption must be taken merely as one of those pleasant dreams that arise out of a desire every reader feels to picture to himself the scenes and personages which old Homer so vividly describes. Yet Lord Derby gives distinctly the fact that in Laodice's web

“ Was interwoven many a toilsome strife  
Of Trojan warriors and of brass-clad Greeks  
For her encounter'd at the hand of Mars.”

That the weaving of tapestry was a favourite pastime at that period we may be certain from Homer again alluding to it in his description of the parting of Hector and Andromache—the most pathetic part of all the sad tale—where he makes Hector foretell with a sorrowful face, and even tearful eye, her future unhappy state when he shall be gone, and says to her :—

“ And yet no dire presage so wounds my mind,  
My mother's death, the ruin of my kind,  
Not Priam's hoary hairs defiled with gore,  
Not all my brother's gasping on the shore  
As thine, Andromache ! thy griefs I dread ;  
I see thee trembling, weeping, captive led !  
In Argive looms our battles to design,  
And woes, of which so large a part was thine.”

We have a further mention of tapestry work in the 14th book, where Juno, the lady I before mentioned, is described as dressing herself in her best—or, as we should say, in her Sunday clothes—in order, alas ! to cajole her husband.

Though belonging to poetry, to which we naturally allow considerable licence, it is not difficult to make out, amidst the description, the fashion of the period. I quote this time from the more literal translator, Lord Derby :—

“ A robe ambrosial then, by Pallas wrought,  
She donn'd, in many a curious pattern traced,  
With golden brooch beneath her breast confined.  
Her zone, from which a hundred tassels hung,  
She girt about her ; and, in three bright drops,  
Her glitt'ring gems suspended from her ears ;  
And all around her grace and beauty shone.  
Then o'er her head th' imperial goddess threw  
A beauteous veil, new-wrought, as sunlight white ;  
And on her well-turn'd feet her sandals bound.  
Her dress completed, from her chamber forth  
She issued.”

Magnificent gems, zones with hundred tassels hung, jewelled earrings, and rich sandals prevailed among the goddesses ; and Juno must have looked lovely, as far as we can tell from seeing her through her beauteous veil—though she must have been a most expensive wife to Jupiter.

We may pass by all this, as we have more serious work before

us. The part where Thetis is described as rising from the sea to console Achilles for the loss of his friend Patroclus brings so vividly before my eyes the beautiful work by Banks, in our National Gallery, that, though properly speaking it does not belong to the history of Art, I cannot resist calling your attention to it, as a truly effective composition, and a most highly finished work. It remained in the hands of Banks's representatives for many years without finding in this island a man capable of appreciating its superlative merit, with the will and means to purchase it, and at last found a refuge by gift in our National Gallery.

Banks died comparatively neglected ; but I am not altogether without hope that the time may come when the good and great may be distinguished from the bad in Sculpture, and a demand for such works may supersede the paltry trash that is now puffed up in the Art-journals of our day. I find the lines in this beautiful work in relief so harmonious that they seem a sort of music of the eye ; and there is a sorrow in the written lines that describe the same event, that impart a melody to them hardly surpassed in any language, as they gradually lead on from the immediate incident portrayed to the visit of the melancholy Thetis to the house of Vulcan—melancholy at the approaching death of her son, foretold by fate as too soon to happen. Vulcan receives her with the cordiality of an old friend long absent, and refers in his kind welcome of her to times gone by, and to kindnesses for which he was in better days indebted to her. Her presence brings back to him events long passed, when he was young and hopeful, the remembrance of which is revived by association with her. We cannot help feeling a sort of respect and sympathy for the old god, perhaps somewhat ill-used, which

none of the other handsomer but less worthy deities excite within us :

“ The silver-footed Queen  
Him swelt’ring at his forge she found, intent  
On forming twenty tripods, which should stand  
The wall surrounding of his well-built house ;  
With golden wheels beneath he furnish’d each,  
And to th’ assembly of the gods endued  
With pow’r to move spontaneous, and return,  
A marvel to behold ! thus far his work  
He had completed ; but not yet had fix’d  
The rich-wrought handles ; these his labour now  
Engaged, to fit them, and to rivet fast.”

How he imbued these tripods with the power to “move spontaneous,” we must leave a Maudsley or a Penn to explain. The old engineering god lays them aside in order that he and his wife Charis may see to the comforts of their guest, and have a chat with her on auld lang syne. Her tale is soon told, and her wants revealed ; and the sturdy old friend sets to again at his work to gratify them with the hearty goodwill of Longfellow’s “ Village Blacksmith :” and with a strength of arm that may, for aught we can tell, have brought a blow on his anvil equal to the Nasmyth hammer. The old god’s palace must have been luxurious, for we read of golden chairs and seats with silver studs adorned, on which Thetis and Vulcan sat during their confab, and of a rich footstool which Charis placed at the feet of her guest. The renowned blacksmith had, Homer tells us, maidens of gold, whose business it was to support him in his movements ; though the advantage of their being of that metal I do not see, unless that they might, in case of need, be melted down. He says, too, speaking of his former days :—

“ I fashion’d then of metal clasps and chains,  
Of spiral coil, rich cups and collars fair.”



He must, in short, have been a first-rate artist, in metal ; and, judging from the account given, I may tell you, punctual as to time. The ring of his hammer and the blast of his bellows are heard even to this day in the lines that follow the preceding scene, and which reveal to us the forging of that great shield, on whose surface an antique world is said to have been embossed in metals of various kinds. This shield, as you know, and the other parts of Achilles' new armour, are what the fair-armed Thetis asked for, and as far as we can tell by the poem waited for whilst they were made. The old founder, as I have before said, goes readily to it, and

" As the work required  
 The stubborn brass, and tin, and precious gold,  
 And silver, first he melted in the fire ;  
 \* \* \* \* \*  
 And first a shield he fashion'd vast and strong  
 With rich adornment ; circled with a rim,  
 Threefold, bright-gleaming whence a silver belt  
 Depended ; of five folds the shield was form'd ;  
 And on its surface many a rare design  
 Of curious art his practised skill had wrought.  
 Thereon were-figured earth, and sky, and sea,  
 The ever-circling sun, and full-orb'd moon,  
 And all the signs that crown the vault of Heaven ;  
 Pleiads and Hyads, and Orion's might,  
 And Arctos, call'd the Wain, who wheels on high  
 His circling course, and on Orion waits ;  
 Sole star that never bathes in th' ocean wave.  
 And two fair populous towns were sculptured there :  
 In one were marriage pomp and revelry,  
 And brides, in gay procession, through the streets  
 With blazing torches from their chambers borne,  
 While frequent rose the hymeneal song.  
 Youths whirl'd around in joyous dance, with sound  
 Of flute and harp ; and, standing at their doors,  
 Admiring women on the pageant gazed

Meanwhile, a busy throng the forum fill'd :  
There between two a fierce contention rose,  
About a death-fine ; to the public one  
Appeal'd, asserting to have paid the whole ;  
While one denied that he had aught received.  
Both were desirous that before the judge  
The issue should be tried ; with noisy shouts  
Their sev'ral partisans encouraged each.  
The heralds still'd the tumult of the crowd :  
On polish'd chairs, in solemn circle, sat  
The rev'rend Elders ; in their hands they held  
The loud-voiced herald's sceptres ; waving these,  
They heard th' alternate pleadings ; in the midst  
Two talents lay of gold, which he should take  
Who should before them prove his righteous cause.  
Before the second town two armies lay,  
In arms refulgent : to destroy the town  
Th' assailants threaten'd, or among themselves  
Of all the wealth within the city stored  
An equal half, as ransom, to divide.  
The terms rejecting, the defenders mann'd  
A secret ambush ; on the walls they placed  
Women and children muster'd for defence,  
And men by age enfeebled ; forth they went,  
By Mars and Pallas led ; these, wrought in gold,  
In golden arms array'd, above the crowd  
For beauty and stature, as befitting gods,  
Conspicuous shone ; of lesser height the rest.  
But when the destined ambuscade was reach'd,  
Beside the river, where the shepherds drove  
Their flocks and herds to water, down they lay,  
In glitt'ring arms accoutred ; and apart  
They placed two spies, to notify betimes  
Th' approach of flocks of sheep and lowing herds.  
These in two shepherds' charge ere long appear'd,  
Who, unsuspecting as they moved along,  
Enjoy'd the music of their past'ral pipes.  
They on the booty, from afar discern'd,  
Sprang from their ambuscade ; and cutting off

The herds, and fleecy flocks, their guardians slew.  
Their comrades heard the tumult where they sat  
Before their sacred altars, and forthwith  
Sprang on their cars, and with fast-stepping steeds  
Pursued the plund'ers, and o'ertook them soon.  
There on the river's bank they met in arms,  
And each at other hurl'd their brazen spears,  
And there were figured Strife and Tumult wild,  
And deadly Fate, who in her iron grasp  
One newly-wounded, one unwounded bore,  
While by the feet from out the press she dragg'd  
Another slain : about her shoulders hung  
A garment crimson'd with the blood of men.  
Like living men they seem'd to move, to fight,  
To drag away the bodies of the slain.

And there was grav'n a wide extended plain  
Of fallow land, rich, fertile, mellow soil,  
Thrice plough'd ; where many ploughmen up and down  
Their teams were driving ; and as each attain'd  
The limit of the field, would one advance  
And tender him a cup of gen'rous wine :  
Then would he turn, and to the end again  
Along the furrow cheerly drive his plough.  
And still behind them darker show'd the soil,  
The true presentment of a new plough'd field,  
Though wrought in gold ; a miracle of Art.  
There too was grav'n a cornfield, rich in grain,  
Where with sharp sickles reapers plied their task ;  
The binders, following close, the bundles tied :  
Three were the binders ; and behind them boys  
In close attendance waiting, in their arms  
Gather'd the bundles, and in order piled.  
Amid them, staff in hand, in silence stood  
The King, rejoicing in the plenteous swathe.  
A little way removed, the heralds slew  
A sturdy ox, and now beneath an oak  
Prepared the feast ; while women mixed hard by,  
White barley porridge for the lab'ers meal.  
And, with rich clusters laden, there was graven

A vineyard fair, all gold ; of glossy black  
The bunches were on silver poles sustain'd ;  
Around a darksome trench ; beyond, a fence  
Was wrought, of shining tin ; and through it led  
One only path, by which the bearers pass'd  
Who gather'd in the vineyard's bounteous store.  
There maids and youths, in joyous spirits bright,  
In woven baskets bore the luscious fruit.  
A boy, amid them, from a clear-toned harp  
Drew lovely music ; well his liquid voice  
The strings accompanied ; they all with dance  
And song harmonious join'd, and joyous shouts,  
As the gay bevy lightly tripp'd along.  
Of straight-horn'd cattle too a herd was graven ;  
Of gold and tin the heifers all were wrought :  
They to the pasture, from the cattle-yard,  
With gentle lowings, by a babbling stream,  
Where quiv'ring reed-beds rustled, slowly moved.  
Four golden shepherds walk'd beside the herd,  
By nine swift dogs attended ; then amid  
The foremost heifers sprang two lions fierce  
Upon the lordly bull : he, bellowing loud,  
Was dragg'd along, by dogs and youths pursued.  
The tough bull's-hide they tore, and gorging lapp'd  
Th' intestines and dark blood ; with vain attempt  
The herdsmen following closely, to th' attack  
Cheer'd their swift dogs ; these shunn'd the lion's jaws,  
And close around them baying, held aloof.

And there the skilful artist's hand had traced  
A pasture broad, with fleecy flocks o'erspread,  
In a fair glade, with fold, and tents, and pens.  
There too, the skilful artist's hand had wrought  
With curious workmanship, a mazy dance,  
Like that which Dædalus in Cnossus erst  
At fair-hair'd Ariadne's bidding framed.  
There, laying each on other's wrists their hand,  
Bright youths and many-suitor'd maidens danced :  
In fair white linen these : in tunics those,  
Well woven, shining soft with fragrant oils ;

These with fair coronets were crown'd, while those  
 With golden swords from silver belts were girt.  
 Now whirl'd they round with nimble practised feet,  
 Easy as when a potter, seated, turns  
 A wheel, new fashion'd by his skilful hand,  
 And spins it round, to prove if true it run :  
 Now featly moved in well-beseeming ranks.  
 A num'rous crowd around, the lovely dance  
 Survey'd, delighted ; while with measured chant  
 Two tumblers, in the midst, were whirling round.  
 About the margin of the massive shield  
 Was wrought the mighty strength of th' ocean stream."

This again, as you may suppose, is Lord Derby's translation, but you may read both his and Pope's with equal benefit to yourselves. The one, however, to which I wish you more particularly to pay attention is the translation by Flaxman from the Greek into the more comprehensive language of Art itself. I feel, indeed, no hesitation in saying that, as a composition, this shield of Achilles by him is one of the finest specimens of modern, and even of ancient Sculpture.

The grandeur of the subjects, the complicated nature of the groupings, made it peculiarly suited to a comprehensive mind like Flaxman's, while the comparative smallness of the figures prevented him from running into those errors of execution to which he was liable in larger works, owing to his physical infirmities. It may be said, indeed, to be Flaxman's masterpiece. A cast of it is in the galleries of the Royal Academy, and I would have no student of any kind fail to give it constant and earnest consideration. It will tend in every way to elevate the style of the sculptor, and will prevent the painter from falling into the vulgar and commonplace, to which his Art is liable from his often having to treat of every-day subjects. The

student will find too, that a proper acquaintance with the original text will make him more cognizant of the truth and beauty of the rendering of that text in Art ; and he may get a further insight into its merits, as well as into the character of the sculptor who executed it, if he take the trouble to compare it with a shield of the same kind by Cellini. In the one, the composition is simple, unaffected, grave ; the figures are masters of the part they are performing, and so do not run into extravagances or overdo their work. The whole is, in short, truly Homeric. The other, with equal knowledge of the human form and its movements, I may almost say more, is restless, fidgety, anxious to display that knowledge to the utmost ; and often does so at the expense of propriety and truth.

I may condense my remarks by saying that one is by Flaxman, the other by Benvenuto Cellini—both geniuses, but of an entirely opposite tone of mind.

You will say that I have been trying to build up a theory to show the existence of Art in the time of Homer, from that which is the mere ideal composition of a poet, and had in all probability no real existence ; and will tell me that, though I have brass enough to set up this theory, I have neither enough of that metal, nor of silver, gold, or tin, to carry out in construction such a work, though all of them are distinctly said by Homer to be included in it. But I must remind you that the poet has no power to create—that is the province of One alone ; he merely combines and re-combines what is present about him, or what he has seen before, giving greater influence to some things, and reducing that of others, so as to show them in a new light or by association of them together to excite in the mind new ideas respecting them. The material must pre-

viously exist, whether for a figure in marble or a figure of speech ; and the beauty of a simile or metaphor would be naught but for the original fact upon which it is founded. We may safely therefore infer that the Art to which Homer alludes in his *Iliad*, had its being in his day, if not long before. He may have embellished it beyond its real worth, but of that we cannot judge, as we do not know the date at which he wrote, but we may not unreasonably suppose that one of the reasons why the Sculpture of his native country became so glorious was that its birth, or at any rate its early growth, was contemporary with the sound of his lyre and the beauty of his song.

I do not pretend to have given you this evening all the allusions to Art that are found in Homer, but merely such a selection as will tempt you to search for more, or to make a note of such as may happen by chance to come before you. There are many others, mostly, as may be supposed, relating to the mode of warfare of the time, such as double-pointed spears, silver-studded swords, and nodding plumes with golden threads entwined ; shining breast-plates and polished greaves, with shields of bull's hide stretched upon brazen-rings, five thick, so as to resist the force of the javelin, even when thrown by the arm of Ajax Telamon. Golden chariots of rich and complicated pattern, and trappings of horses that rivalled in brilliancy the sun at noon-day, while covering steeds of god-like descent who, instead of saying "neigh" to everything, expressed their sympathy with the dangers of the fight in words of heroic poetry. There are, however, other objects of Art mentioned, connected with the religious ceremonies of both contending nations, and even with their joyous feastings and

funereal wailings, such as tripods and golden cups used for libations to the gods, and awarded as prizes to the victors in their games.

“The prizes of the runners, swift of foot,  
Achilles next set forth ; a silver bowl,  
Six measures its content, its workmanship  
Unmatch'd on earth, of Sidon's costliest art  
The product rare ; thence o'er the misty sea  
Brought by Phœnicians, who in port arrived,  
Gave it to Thoas ; by Euneus last,  
The son of Jason, to Patroclus paid,  
In ransom of Lycaon, Priam's son.”

All these I would have the student in Art meditate upon, so that he may in his work give as faithful a version as possible of them. I do not ask him to consider whether the tale is altogether true, or altogether false ; whether the human heroes who performed their part in it are supposed to be real personages, or merely allegorical of the contention of the mightier forces of nature in a primitive world.

These are questions that may by chance revolve themselves in his mind, but have nothing to do with our present purpose, the studying of Homer in relation to Art. The sculptor should look to him with a view to his profession, though he will not do badly if he extend that view to other matters. I would have him recollect that Sculpture is a classical Art—more classical, or in other words more of an abstract nature, than Painting ; and for this reason I would have him a greater reader of the classical authors.

Lord Derby expresses a fear in the preface to his work that the love of classical learning is falling off, and there is truth in what he says ; but of all men sculptors should be the last to



abandon it. Their Art was founded upon it, and though other influences may have taken the place, to a certain extent, of the original principle, it still retains its influence and tends to inspire it with beauty of style and purity of feeling. Without a certain amount of idealization no work, however individual in its character or purpose, can be pronounced altogether successful in Sculpture. This idealizing or generalizing is, in fact, one of the distinctions between Art and Nature, for the reason that the effects of Art are intended to produce a permanent and therefore general impression, while those of Nature have in many cases only a momentary and in almost all instances a changeable one. This power of idealization may, in my opinion, be well cultivated in the sculptor by the study of the old poets, who possess most of this quality, and are, in short, the simplest of all in their narrative, and therefore the grandest of all in their writings, from the fact that the field on which they worked had been less trodden upon, and from their having lived in times when humanity was of a more simple nature, when the passions displayed themselves with less reserve, because less masked by hypocrisy, and virtue and vice stood out more distinctly from each other, and represented less complicated problems.

The music of Homer's Iliad is heard at this distant period the loudest of them all, because it was sung when the air was free from the busy hum of men, and even now he is best listened to apart from public haunts. I would have the student in Sculpture, when so retiring with him, thank him for the many marvellous groups he presents to him for his Art. I would have him note, as a lesson to himself, with what infinite variety every hero of the tale triumphs aloft over his adversary,



or bites the ground in death. The vanquisher and vanquished in each case—for almost the whole war is represented by a series of single combats—portray distinct combinations of form and feature, separate from any that have been shown before; so that the sculptor, with very little imagination, can picture them to himself complete. I would have him remark how in all cases he excites the sympathy of his audience by allusions more or less affecting, according to the character of the individual connected with them, and how he dismisses each one to Hades in a manner suitable to his relative qualities or deserts.

Here is a mine of gold for your Art. Even Homer's numerous similes, though perhaps appearing somewhat monotonous to our modern ears, are grand in themselves and illustrative of the habits of his time, and form subjects in which Art may revel and enjoy itself.

You will be glad to think the hour devoted to my lecture is almost at an end, and that I am consequently come to the finale and am about to give you the moral of my tale. It is this: Read Homer—honestly, in Greek, if you can—but read him.





## LECTURE XV.

### THE EARLY HISTORY OF SCULPTURE.

HERODOTUS.



FIND there is some advantage to me in my being called on by circumstances to lecture twice in the week instead of once, as there is a better chance for me of escaping the remark made by the magistrates to the Samians expelled by Polycrates ; who, when they were pleading their cause in a long harangue, said to them, "We have forgotten the first part of your speech, and do not understand the last." For fear, however, that those of my audience who honoured me with their presence on the previous occasion, may have fallen into that dilemma, I will begin my second discourse by reminding them that in the former one I was endeavouring to sift out the early history of Sculpture, by running in a hasty manner through the Iliad ; a manner it is my duty, as Professor, to advise the students not to adopt. My search may have appeared like the searching for a needle in a truss of hay ; but still it will, I think, be acknowledged that there were some findings of those early indications of Art, never likely now to be otherwise than indistinct. As we proceed on to later times we may find the records more clear

and more frequent, but for that we must wait patiently ; and this we shall better do, if we recollect that Art, and particularly Sculpture, was one of the earliest modes of expression adopted by man : that it was coeval with the creation of language, and long antecedent to the more complicated systems of moral philosophy and science, through which intellect gradually developed itself. It exists in a rudimentary state, even at the present moment, among savage nations, who have hardly any other language in which to express their ideas ; showing that the imitating of form is ever the earliest effort by which the existence of thought is portrayed. How then can we expect to discover its beginning, or even to trace the early part of its growth ?

We will now take up, in furtherance of our search, our earliest profane writer, Herodotus, within the boundary of whose lines the streams of Fable and History unite and flow on awhile together ; throwing up, as they glide along, loose fragments of Art generally, and of Sculpture more particularly—the most primitive and then most prevalent mode of expression in it. In his earlier chapters we find the story of Arion singing the Orthian strain on the deck of the ship from whence he was condemned to be thrown overboard by sailors, restrained, though only for a moment, from their murderous intentions by the harmony of his song. His escape to land on the back of a dolphin is a subject often chosen for Sculpture, from its imaginative character, giving it such scope for fanciful treatment.

We find in Herodotus, too, an account of Cræsus the rich offering a golden figure of a lion, with many other things, as presents to the Oracle at Delphi ; whose priests, no doubt, managed to retain within their own hands the chief influence of their day by the ambiguous sayings they uttered. Some

silver bowls are mentioned, too, and an opinion hazarded that one of them, from its excellence, must have been the production of Theodorus the Samian. This Theodorus is again alluded to in an after part of the work as a maker of a seal composed of gold and an emerald ; we have here not only the name of a celebrated metal-chaser and gem-engraver handed down to us, but also a distinct preference shown for good over bad work, indicating that considerable progress had taken place. We may put against this, however, that the use of expensive materials, such as gold, in Art, is generally indicative either of a very early or of a very decayed period ; notwithstanding the instances to the contrary recorded of the Phidian Minerva and Jupiter, where, in the best time of Greek Sculpture, a superstitious impression was effected on the multitude by the presence of valuable substances and glowing colours. That nothing remains to us of these composite works, while the more solid marbles of the period are yet in existence, may be a lesson worth attending to. Turning back to the time of which we are treating, we read of Croesus—the king whose name has become with us the symbol of wealth—showing his immense treasures to Solon, and asking him whom amidst all his travels he had found to be the most happy. What use he could have made of these treasures, without the blessings of a National Debt and Promoters of Companies, it is difficult to say. At any rate he was disappointed in the wise man's answer : for he expected to be pointed out himself as the one of all others the most blest, whereas Solon tells him that many men who abound in wealth are unhappy, and many who have a moderate competency are fortunate.

The reply is longer than this, but I am not here to teach

artists philosophy ; yet I cannot help thinking that discussions of this kind originated the tone of thought among the Greeks which made them so great : and that by it their Art was idealized, and restrained in that sensuous character which ever more or less belongs to the workings of an early age. Cræsus, of whom we are now speaking, and who seems to have been a liberal promoter of the Arts, appears to have presented many Art-gifts to the Oracles, among them a statue of a woman in gold, three cubits high, which the Delphians say was the image of his baking-woman. This is one of the earliest allusions to portraiture, if portrait it were, in Sculpture ; and we must presume it to have been very like—though whether the baking-woman was of solid gold, or, as is more probable, only crusted over with it, it is difficult even with our present experience to say. The art of plating with metal was known to the Egyptians long before this date, and doubtless to the Greeks also ; and the appearance of wealth may have been as valuable then as it is now. Further on we have the account of Cræsus giving to the Lacedæmonians the requisite gold for making a statue of Apollo. Works of Art might then be said to be really worth their weight in gold, though the term is rarely if ever applied by critics to modern Sculpture.

The Lacedæmonians presented him in return with a bowl covered outside to the rim with figures. This bowl, however, appears to have been lost or stolen on its road to Cræsus, who, poor man ! had in the meantime been taken prisoner, or at any rate was reported to have been. It is with shreds and patches such as these, picked up here and there, we have to clothe the early history of our Art ; that they are few and far between must be acknowledged, but if we compare their number with

the total absence of all reference to it in our modern and more detailed history, we shall understand how important a feature it was in those early ages. That it existed at all amid the turbulent wars, not only of distant nations, but of neighbouring portions of what may be considered the same country, seems most surprising ; but it is accounted for by its being the means of promoting religion, such as it was, among every one of them. It grew, in fact, into more or less importance, as well as into more or less beauty, according as religion was more or less prevalent among the multitude, or became more or less elevating to its devotees ; in the same way as it has now, from an obverse reason, been obliged to take a lower walk. Other methods have been discovered to promote religion with us, and Art is scarcely acknowledged or hardly cared for as a means of advancement in it. The period to which we are now alluding was, as far as we can judge, one of comparative peace, and we find, as I have said before, our friend Croesus distributing his Art-gifts largely, whether from an ostentatious or a superstitious motive it is difficult to determine ; but the misfortunes of war soon overtake him, and he is not merely reported as a prisoner, but positively taken captive by the Persians ; and we learn of him, that when he had lost his kingdom and his riches, he turned philosopher, and took to moralizing on the changes of fortune—not an uncommon thing under such circumstances ; still, however, clinging to the very last to the sayings of the Oracles, which, like “juggling fiends, paltered with him in a double sense, keeping the word of promise to his ear and breaking it to his hope.” The great financier passes through a world of trouble, and undergoes many misfortunes ; he is condemned to destruction, and placed on a pile of fire, but escapes, by a

sort of miracle, without so much as burning his fingers, and at last, to a certain extent, regains his position in the world, though he appears to become a sort of satellite to Cyrus.

While this is going on Herodotus makes little or no allusion to Art, at least not to the arts of peace. The times were out of joint. Fortifications and other accessories of war take the place of statues of the gods and wassail bowls, and the description of these again is very clear and intelligible. Ecbatana, for instance, is said to have been a city built upon a rising ground by the Medes under the direction of Deioces, and surrounded by seven circles of walls one within the other, each circle raised above the other by the height of the battlements only; the largest of these walls was equal, we are told, in circumference to the city of Athens, and the battlements of the first circle were white, the second black, the third purple, the fourth blue, and the fifth bright red; the two last, our author says, were plaited, one with silver the other with gold.

Here is evidence that the Assyrians resorted to colour of the most primitive kind in their Art, as did indeed almost every nation; and evidence, at the same time, by which we are enabled, with the aid of the Assyrian sculpture now in our possession, to judge, to a certain extent, of their style of architecture, which appears at least as appropriate to its purpose as that of the present day. This description, in Herodotus, of the fortified walls of Ecbatana gains additional interest with us from its being the same alluded to in the grandly-written book of Judith, where a further account of it is given, and the size and number of its gates are recorded. It was, as you will recollect, the residence of Assur, the king of the Assyrians, whose palace is said to have been in the centre; and who



sent out from thence his general, Holofernes, on that expedition against Judæa wherein he lost his head after a not uncommon manner. I must not, however, weary you with details on this matter—the subject belongs more properly to your Professor of Architecture than to me—but I will, *en passant*, call to your mind what a beautiful subject you have for illustration in Sculpture in the charming yet dignified Judith, the beloved saviour of her country, and the revered heroine of her people ; not as usually represented in Painting, where the bloody death of the oppressor is often portrayed with too much horror for the real purposes of Art, but as adorned in her female decorations, her jewels, and her bracelets, and showing to the multitude the head of him who had made their hearts palpitate and their knees tremble with fear. The proper character of the male head may be obtained from the Assyrian sculptures in our Museum, and, if artistically treated, it is a very fine one. I will leave it to your consideration, and go on to other things.

A little further we find in Herodotus a sentence that shows at once the cause of the Persians, great as they were at the time, both in power and wealth, never having excelled in Art, at least not in the higher regions of Art, where the human figure and its passions are dealt with. I quote him when he says: “It is not their practice to erect statues, or temples, or altars ; but they charge those with folly who do so, because, as I conjecture, they do not think the gods have human forms, as the Greeks do. They were accustomed to ascend the highest parts of the mountains, and offer sacrifice to Jupiter ; and they call the whole circle of the heavens by the name of Jupiter.” Here is something like an approach to Unitarianism, and, as I

think, to common sense. Though the creed may not have been at the time conducive to the promotion of the Fine Arts, it was at any rate an advance in reasoning, and the way Herodotus puts the sentence seems to me to suggest that he went himself a great way, if not altogether with it.

I must content myself with advising the student to read in the writings of this author the interesting account of Babylon, said to have been the seat of the Assyrian government after the destruction of Nineveh : and of the temple of Jupiter Belus, where again mention is made of a statue of solid gold, twelve cubits, or upwards of eighteen feet high—though this time only from hearsay, for Herodotus's words are, "I did not see it ; I only relate what is said by the Chaldeans." Darius, we are told, attempted to take away this statue, but dared not, though Xerxes his son afterwards succeeded, killing the priest who forbade him to remove it. These figures were evidently great temptations for plunder, so that it is only fair to presume that they were valuable for their material, as well as for their qualities as works of Art. I have mentioned the parts of the writings of Herodotus that refer to the destruction of Nineveh and the building of Babylon, more on account of the interest they possess within themselves than for their reference to Sculpture. They are proofs, when combined with what has since been discovered, of the accuracy of his descriptions as far as his knowledge went, and it is well that the student should believe in the old man. He tells us that the walls of Babylon were built of bricks baked in the sun, and made from clay dug out of the moat immediately surrounding them. That this is true, is shown from our finding no sculptural records of that great city. We have indeed, thanks to Mr. Layard, small objects of bronze and

other metals that come from thence. Babylon, in fact, was celebrated for the quality of its bronze, but no works in stone of anything like large dimensions have been found there. An inscribed brick, or one impressed by the foot of some animal, are almost the only relics that have survived: while of the still older Nineveh, where large blocks of marble were used, we have examples of our Art that enable us to understand the character of the inhabitants generally, together with most of the manners and customs of those who had to serve and suffer under the dominion of their cruel kings. The old historian is ever truthful in what he asserts, though perhaps not always absolutely correct in his information. He was, in fact, something more than a literal recorder of events, for his observations, though he does not rank among the philosophers, often portray a knowledge of human nature, and of the varied effects produced upon it by education and other circumstances. The writer cannot have been without some understanding of it who relates that Croesus, a prisoner to Cyrus, advised the latter, instead of destroying the Lydians, who had rebelled against him, to order them to keep no weapons of war in their possession, and teach their sons instead to play on the cithara, and strike the guitar: telling his captor, "you will then soon see them becoming women instead of men, and they will never give you any apprehensions about their revolting." He who records this, though he might have been aware of the refining character of the Fine Arts, must have felt strongly their enervating effects when carried to excess.

We have had nations of a much later date who have evaporated their energies, their patriotic feelings, indeed all their higher qualities, in the seducing luxury of song, and in undue attention to Art. Sculpture included: and who have become in

consequence listless in matters of a more useful, vigorous kind. I am telling you what I deem to be a truth ; but truths, I have heard, should not always be told, and this one perhaps would be better told elsewhere.

We will turn to other things. Take up again our author Herodotus. The careful reader of him will find, amidst allusions to wars and to what we should now call local differences, repeated references to the Art of the day, mostly Sculpture ; records of temples and towers which, like those alluded to in Shakespeare's "Tempest," have vanished like the baseless fabric of a vision, and left no rack behind, whether cloud-capped or not I cannot tell ; lists of statues, mostly described as golden, and for that reason less durable ; descriptions of tripods, of the same valuable material, presented in the first instance to the victors in the games, but afterwards carefully deposited by the priests in their temples, and devoted to the service of the Gods. I have described in a previous portion of the lecture another article connected with their religious ceremonies, the mention of which frequently occurs, by calling it a wassail-bowl. It really served for libations to the gods, and I trust you will not think me guilty of supposing for one moment that it served for drinking-bouts within those sacred edifices ; though the old Pagan worship often ran into customs that partook strongly of such things, and went into excesses of even a more vicious kind.

The reader of Herodotus will learn that the Lydian territory which was governed by Cræsus is described as barren of wonders. The monument of Alyattes, the father of the latter, he tells us, was the greatest of all except those of the Egyptians and Babylonians. The Lydians are said again to have been

the first of all nations to introduce the art of coining gold and silver, as well as the inventors of many games : among them, the one called Huckle-bones, so often represented in ancient Sculpture. We have mention, it is true, in our Scriptures, of money being found in the children of Israel's sacks on their return from Egypt, but we must not imply from this that the money was represented in coin. There are nations at this moment whose payments are made by rough lumps of silver, the relative value being, of course, determined by weight ; so that there is no contradiction in Joseph's history of the Lydians having been the first to introduce stamped metal or coins for the purpose of mercantile affairs. We find evidence independent of our Scriptures in the Egyptian hieroglyphics, that commercial as well as other transactions were carried on in the Delta by weight and measurement of various metals and other rare materials later than the time of Joseph's history. Tuthmosis, who is supposed to have reigned while the Israelites were in captivity, is said to have received, as a supply for a ritual he set up in honour of the spirit of his father, five measures of pearls, 236 heavy ingots of gold, 58 bars, and 586 talents of silver. The same thing is shown by an inscription on a mutilated column at Ghizeh, where the tribute of a commander of a fortress is said to have been 329 rings of solid silver, 100 rings of gold, 100 bars of wrought metal, and vessels of copper, brass, and iron, and where it is recorded that these were embarked on a vessel.

The author supplies us with an account of two famous queens, Semiramis and Nitocris, who did wonderful things for Babylon, raised high mounds, and turned the course of the Euphrates for the purpose of defence : the latter, Nitocris, as he says, lived five

generations after the former, and was, in his opinion, the cleverest of the two; she, like the former, dug canals, drained marshes, and built a bridge over that part of the Euphrates which ran through the city, dividing it into two distinct parts: the description given of this bridge, consisting of planks laid on mounds, which were removed by night and replaced by day, is interesting, whether to the artist or the antiquarian: but what is most appropriate to our lecture this evening is the account of a monument to herself, which I will convey to you from a translation of Herodotus's own words. He says: "Over the most frequented gate of the city she prepared a sepulchre for herself, high up above the gate, and on the sepulchre she had engraved, 'Should any one of my successors, kings of Babylon, find himself in want of money, let him open this sepulchre, and take as much as he chooses: but if he be not in want, let him not open it, for that were not well.'" This monument remained undisturbed, Herodotus says, until the kingdom came to Darius; but it seemed hard to him that this gate should be of no use, and that, when money was lying there, and this money inviting him to take it, he should not do so: for no use was made of this gate, for this reason, that a dead body was over the head of anyone who passed through it—there was probably a superstition which pronounced it to be unlucky to pass under a dead body. Darius therefore opened the sepulchre, and instead of money found only the body, and these words written:—"Hadst thou not been insatiably covetous, and greedy of the most sordid gain, thou wouldest not have opened the chambers of the dead." Our more modern thieves would perhaps have called this "*A do*."

As the reader goes further into the book, he will find allusions

to Art increase in number, and among them many other anecdotes of a highly interesting nature. Herodotus gives an account of Egypt, which he visited; records the false theories put forth as to the cause of the overflowing of the Nile, and sets up one of his own, not always quite intelligible. He touches upon many of the manners and customs of the Egyptians, and deals with their religious ceremonies; these the artist will do well to become acquainted with, though they are not always of the purest character; but they let him into a knowledge of the amount of civilization that then existed.

In Herodotus will be found the story that explains why the Egyptians represent their god Jupiter Ammon with a ram's head. Of this ram's head we have a representation in our Museum of a very large size, and of a very truthful character of Art. he says that Hercules—not the Greek gentleman of that name—was desirous of seeing Jupiter, but that Jupiter was unwilling to be seen of him; at last, however, as Hercules persisted in having his wish, I presume he had recourse to the following contrivance. Having slain a ram, he cut off the head, and held it before himself, and then, having put on the fleece, he in that form showed himself to Hercules.

It is hardly necessary for me to say that Jupiter is the title applied to the chief of the gods by the Greeks, and that Herodotus uses the names of his own country when speaking of the gods of the Egyptians. The ram's head in our Museum which I have mentioned was dedicated to the deity Ammon Ra, but it was but natural that our author should confound it with the Greek Jupiter—or rather should have given him that name, as he is designated in the hieroglyphic inscriptions, [ of the thrones of the world, resident in Thebes, living in

truth, the great god, lord of all heaven, king of eternity, king of the gods. He, in fact, holds the same place in the Egyptian, as Jupiter did in the Greek mythology. In another part of his work, Herodotus refers to him as the Theban Jupiter.

Some writers accuse our author of taking his information from unreliable sources, and assert that, from his not being acquainted with the language of the country he travelled in, he was often deceived into the belief of things that had existence nowhere but in the inventive faculties of those about him, principally merchants who were trading between Greece and Egypt, and frequenting the markets of the latter place.

Ancient dragomans, it is evident from Herodotus's writings, like our sailors, knew how to spin yarns, some of them as wonderful—if not more wonderful—than the sea-serpent, or any other of our sea stories.

If the old proverb, that a little knowledge is a dangerous thing, were a sound one—which I do not believe—these tales would tend to show it ; only, unfortunately, they are founded on a total absence of knowledge, rather than on the little referred to. Still, with all his ignorance, we are bound to pay respect to a contemporary writer, who was honest, and saw much of what he writes about, though he may have taken the rest from the mouths of others who amused themselves with his credulity. Information of any kind was in that age often false, and always difficult to obtain. He visited Egypt about 430 B.C., and speaks partly of what he saw, and partly of things belonging to an era not improbably more than two thousand years before his time. Many circumstances have since tended to show that where he writes from his own knowledge, he is truthful ; and I may safely defend him from any intentional falsehood, for



he says himself, speaking of his observations in Egypt: "Hitherto, I have related what I have seen, what I have thought, and what I have learned by inquiry: but from this point I proceed to give the Egyptian account according to what I heard; and there is added to it something of my own observation. The priests informed me so and so."

That he relates many wonderful tales cannot be denied—tales, perhaps, that the priests were interested in keeping up. They themselves were the only possessors of knowledge at that time, and, as far as we can tell, were in no way desirous of extending that knowledge among the multitude; so that, after all, you will do well to take much that he records as history, simply as his story.

I have already told you that the chief feature in Egyptian Sculpture is symbolism; I need not, therefore, remind you that in the ridiculous anecdote of Jupiter and Hercules there is in all probability something of a more serious nature set forth—not impossibly of an astronomical nature—as there is again in the more serious story of Myceronius, a good king, who, having lost his daughter, seems, if we take the tale literally, to have erected to her memory a figure of a kneeling cow, with the disc of the sun between her horns. Our author tells us that this figure was not buried, but that the people carried it out during their religious ceremonies to the light, agreeable to a wish expressed by the daughter to her father Myceronius, when she was dying, to be permitted to see the sun once a year. In all this there will be no difficulty, I think, in detecting an astronomical meaning. You will, I am sure, have often met with representations of this cow in Egyptian Art; and Bonomi's work on Egypt gives an outline of a head supposed

to be that of Athor, the Egyptian Venus, with the sun or moon between two projecting horns at the top. This, however, may have nothing to do with the preceding story, but may simply refer to the sun, of which the Egyptians were worshippers.

I am wandering somewhat erratically, you will say, through Herodotus's writings ; but I am anxious the student in Sculpture should be well acquainted with them : he will find things offensive to good taste, but these he must excuse. Our primitive historians give us the picture of ancient days from a nearer point than the classic poets, so that we lose something of that enchantment which distance lends to the scene. Things come out clearer when deprived of that halo which poetry throws over them, and do not always present themselves in a more agreeable aspect.

The author with whom we are dealing urges, in fact, in his writings, arguments—by no means unconvincing—that tend to show all that exciting tale upon which poets have loved to dream and artists to dwell, the flight of Helen and the taking of Troy, to be but an absurd, inconsistent fiction, or at the best a myth : so soon did the daylight of the mind, then only at its dawn, begin to dispel the fanciful mists of its earlier imaginings. The walls of Troy may have been discovered, but their existence does not prove the story of Menelaus's wrongs or Hector's death as having any better foundation than the vision of a brain. We are apt to forget that in many cases it is the law that creates the crime, and to set up for ancient times the standard of morality of the present age ; whereas we have no right to drag the old writer, in his rough, antique dress, into the light of modern days, and ask him to conform himself

to our notions : he wrote, no doubt, for futurity, but could he have foreseen how changed that future would be, his narrative would not perhaps have been so truthful, nor, for that reason, so interesting. The reading of Herodotus will serve to impress the student with a correct idea of the times, and will show him how Art illustrates History, and how in turn History holds up the candle to Art, and enables us to see and thoroughly understand the otherwise inexplicable creations of her fancy.

You will wonder why, in a lecture on the antecedents of Sculpture, I should call to your notice that part of our author where he alludes to the system of cattle-breeding among the Egyptians, and gives a description of the care and attention paid by them to the selecting animals of the finest shape and purest colour. Specimens that could stand the severest test on both these points were alone thought worthy of serving for sacrifices to the gods ; and these were considered sacred beasts, and were looked after, each by a separate attendant.

Great study was evidently devoted to the attaining of beauty, both of shape and hue, in these creatures ; so that we may calculate that the flesh of many a Grand Duchess, who, had she lived in the present age, would have been worth some hundreds of pounds—if not more—was wasted in honour of these greedy gods. My object in dwelling on this, is to call to your remembrance, and I think I may, the beautiful Egyptian papyri drawings still existing, in which these lovely specimens of the bucolic tribe are given in all their beauty ; and you will acknowledge, I am sure, that they exhibit all the points, if not more than are looked for, in our Christmas cattle-shows. This could not be, had not the cattle themselves been perfect in their shape ; and unless you choose to acknowledge to less taste than a Kentish

grazier—though that is hardly possible—you will not fail to admire them. Egyptian Art excels particularly in the representation of animals. The people themselves were believers in the doctrine of the transmigration of souls; and I will say, without touching on that question, that in their Art they always gave the soul of the animal represented, though they did not go much into the anatomy of its body.

Herodotus explains too, most distinctly, the modes of embalming the dead, but these I must get you to read for yourselves. Part of this process was performed in the place where the person died, after which the body was carried in a boat with others to Abydos, the city of the resurrection, and then the work was completed.

It appears that the embalmers—whose trade, like other cheerful ones, was by the laws of caste hereditary—kept coloured models which showed the effect of their handiwork when complete, in three different ways: the expensive, the moderate, and the cheap—and, I may add, nasty. These they exhibited to the relations, to give them their choice before beginning the work; so that the rich heir, who inherited a good round sum, might display his inconsolable grief by dressing-up the deceased in splendid style, when at last he had departed; while he who had been forgotten in the will might show his purer taste by going more modestly to work; and the poor man might dispose of his friend, if he had any, with little or no expense. Whether these models were the same as those handed round to the guests at their feasts to remind them of what they were to come to, I cannot say. It is not improbable, for they were of a portable size, and it is evident that what we term delicacy of feeling did not exist to any great extent in those days. They may, in

that case, have served as another version of Hamlet's speech : "The funeral baked meats did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables." The holding of funereal banquets was a practice among the ancient Egyptians. In their lesser productions, such as the fresco decoration of their walls, or their papyri drawings, they give representations of their domestic and mercantile occupations, the musical and other entertainments in their houses, the selling of geese and other birds and beasts, and the recording in their books by the scribes of the quantities supplied. Not unfrequently, too, these works portray the going to, or returning from the hunt ; but even these smaller works of Art, whether belonging to Painting or Sculpture, have mostly reference either to their religious ceremonies and beliefs or to the conquests of their chiefs. In all instances, as it appears to me, whether in the representation of a battle, a devotional ceremony, or a procession, the chief personage is distinguished from the rest by a disproportion of size. The conqueror in his chariot, who is slaying his Ethiopian enemy, is at least twice as large as those he is slaughtering, and this must have been, not for the sake of perspective, of which they knew indeed little or nothing, but to give him importance ; as the disproportion exists between him and the victim close under his wheels, through whom his spear is at the moment thrust. He is, in fact, represented in most cases as quelling with his own hand whole hosts of his opponents, who are flying before him, or dying at his feet by hundreds. The intention of this is to give the king, and the king alone, the glory of the victory.

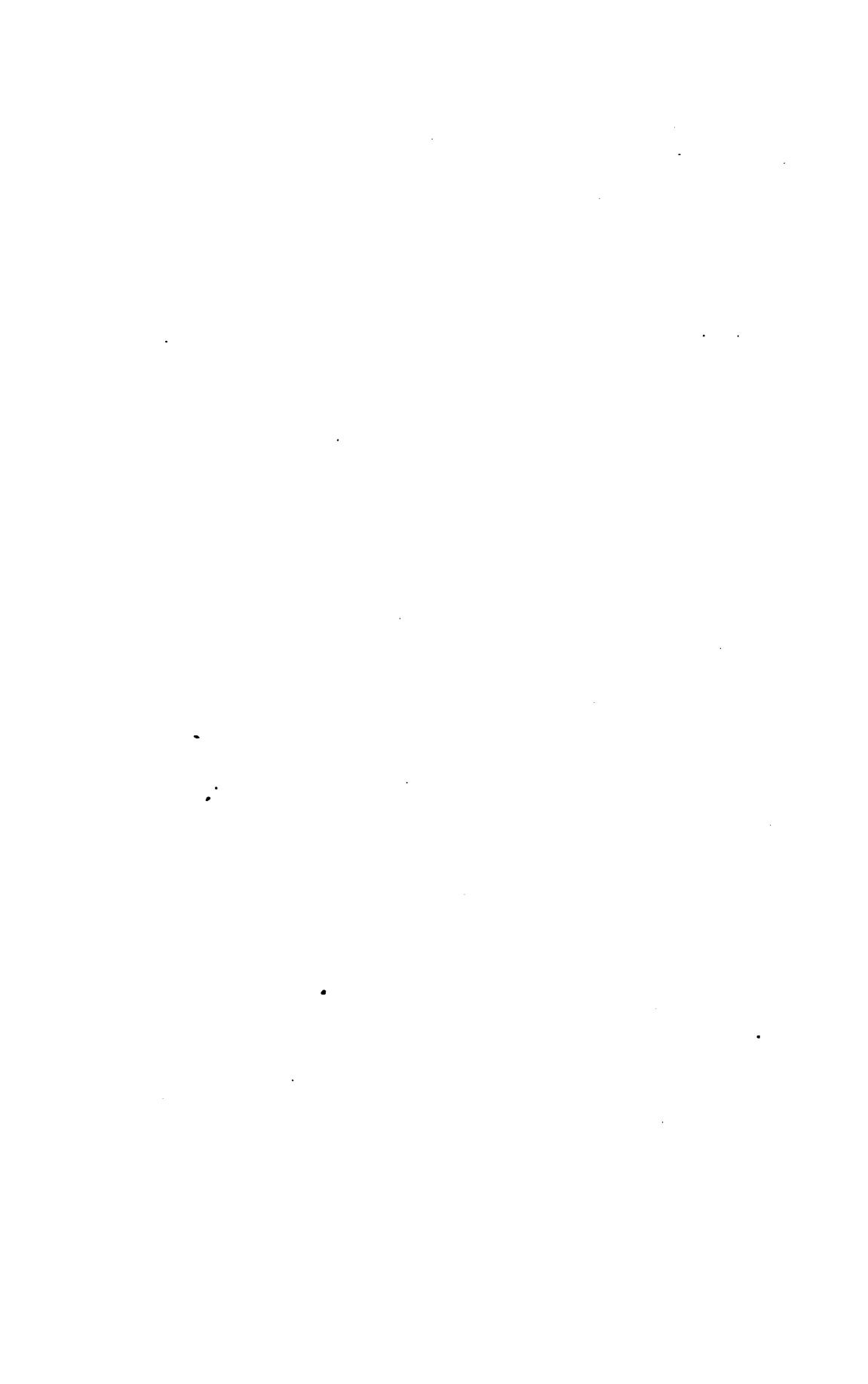
I quote a modern publication, well worth reading, called the "Monumental History of Egypt," by William Osborne, which says : "Art in Egypt was altogether impatient of the trammels,

not of truth merely, but of probability. The conquests of Pharaoh must be achieved by the mere terror of the arms of Egypt, and by his own personal prowess. The fierce contention, the doubtful issue, the heroism of both parties, which give to the Homeric fictions their truth and thrilling interest, were altogether unknown to Egyptian Art. It had no human sympathy with foreign enemies. They were noxious reptiles, whose portraiture could give no pleasure unless they were writhing with pain or undergoing destruction; whose names were never mentioned in her songs unassociated with the bitterest aspersions and the vilest and most degrading epithets. Of this peculiarity our pages contain very ample illustrations; and this it is which goes so far to deprive Art in Egypt of all that can create either pleasure or interest." This is a true observation when viewed from the artist's point. All representations of contentions of any kind should be so given as to leave some doubt of the ultimate result, as it is on this doubt that the mind speculates, and derives pleasure from that speculation. Where everything is decided, where the work of one side is easy, and the chance of the other nothing, the spectator creates no hereafter out of it, and so feels no concern in it. It is this, as our writer says, that gives to the Homeric fictions their truth and thrilling interest; in other words, gathers poetry out of fact, and enjoyment out of what is the reverse of enjoyable. But these works of the Egyptians were made with no reference whatever to the beautiful of Art; their object was to perpetuate persons or events in history, or to cultivate the superstition by which the priest profited or the ruler retained power.

I have met with so many sharp points sticking up in the rough road Herodotus travelled on, and have found the sandy

soil of the country over which he went so wearying to the feet, as well as so indistinct in the traces it has left of his steps, that I have been induced to pause and divide the labour of following him into two evenings' work instead of one.









SARDANAPALUS, KING OF ASSYRIA.

*H. Weckes, R.A.*



## LECTURE XVI.

### THE EARLY HISTORY OF SCULPTURE.

CONTINUATION OF HERODOTUS.



**D**URING my last lecture, when I was discussing with you the references to Art in Herodotus, you may, perhaps, have said that I was wasting your time on trifles, and on things but slightly connected with Sculpture. But, in the first place, these trifles are the very things that escape the attention of the student in reading ; and, in the next, they form, when combined, the very means by which we best understand the manners and customs of the nation or age of which we are endeavouring to catch a glimpse. It is through them, in fact, that we are enabled to enter into their domestic life, see them in their homes, and watch them in their daily occupation. We obtain a view, too, by these minutiae of the relative position of one class to another, and of the laws that bind the classes altogether as a people, and so come to better understand the larger matters of Art that are around and about them. The author of whom we are treating alludes quite as much to the Art of Egypt, where he was only an occasional traveller, as to that of Greece, the country to which he belonged. But unless we can picture to ourselves the difference

between the two peoples, we can hardly appreciate the relative value of Art in each. The one nation, living in a warmer climate than the other, was not only of a darker complexion, but, I may say, like most nations that reside in arid climates, of an inferior race. It is true that the Egyptians were at one time the leaders in the old world, when the little advancement that took place depended on the kings and rulers of the day ; but they had to give way to others of more active character and more moderate temperature, when civilization came to depend on the increase of intellect among the multitude. They then became exhausted by that lassitude which heat produces, and so were beaten in the race. They had attained their highest point when, by means of superstitious creeds and a certain amount of knowledge among the few, the governing power was rendered comparatively safe, and so society prevented from running into utter disorder; but were unable under this system to proceed further. We must, however, give them credit as great astronomers and geometricians; and that the latter science had even more intimate connection with their Fine Arts than it has with that of later days no student will deny, if he gives the question a moment's thought. But in Greece an active school of philosophy was gradually growing up, by dint of intellectual argument, that eventually became the means of freeing the mind from all thoughts except those that were founded on that reasoning power that has been given us for our exercise. At the end of the fifth and beginning of the fourth century before Christ, Herodotus had written his history or relation of facts, and Socrates and Plato discussed their moral and political axioms.

The student will have to consider these differences when

comparing the distinction of style and purpose between the Arts of the two countries. He will have to recollect that in Egypt, influences caused Egyptian Art to be ponderous in size, and therefore impressive, or rather suppressive, to the multitude; he will have to call to mind that their Art is neither suggestive, like that of the Greeks, of any moral principles, nor intended to convey to the many any ideas of self-elevation; that it is rather mysterious than clear and explicit in its meaning, for the reason that its intention is to dimly exhibit to them a something higher and more powerful than themselves, from which they were so far removed that they had only to blindly worship, and to which there was neither hope nor chance of a nearer approach. It was the representation, as far as they could understand, of a fixed system, unintelligible and immutable, with which the multitude had no further part than that of serving in the most abject and unquestioning manner. Its object was fully attained before Art began, and hence the almost total absence of change in it, and the complete want of all improvement throughout. The student has to recollect, in short, that Art, in one instance, was the representation of a stationary period of the mind; while, in the other, it was the coadjutor of an advancing one, though of one as yet trammelled by the superstitions that invariably clog its early efforts.

The dissertations on the writings of Herodotus with which I must conclude that part of the history of Art I promised you in my previous lecture, will consist mostly of allusions to Egyptian Sculpture, or rather to the causes that influenced the Art of that country. I should like, however, before proceeding in that direction, to name first, for the benefit of the student, two or three subjects taken from him, that appear to me particularly

suited to the calling of the sculptor. They belong to those pages which relate to his account of the Greeks and Persians, the two great nations that had been lately contending together. My doing so may be out of place, but I shall go on more regularly afterwards. One of them is the death of Leonidas. Herodotus says that in his time a stone lion stood commemorating the event, in the pass where he fought and died for his country. The subject is one that, besides giving great scope to the sculptor for the grouping of figures and for variety of action, excites noble and invigorating thoughts. The Greeks were proud of their man, who was almost the sole unselfish hero of the day; and the English are not unmindful of bravery, whether ancient or modern. Another subject I would recommend, will be found in the fifth book, called *Terpsichore*. I must give it you in our author's own words; he says:—"Pigries and Mantyes were Pæonians who, when Darius had crossed over into Asia, came to Sardis, bringing with them their sister, who was tall and beautiful; and, having watched the opportunity when Darius was seated in public in the suburb of the Lydians, did as follows. Having dressed their sister in the best manner they could, they sent her for water, carrying a pitcher on her head, leading a horse on her arm, and spinning flax. As the woman passed by, it attracted the attention of Darius, for what she was doing was neither according to the Persian or Lydian customs, nor of any other people in Asia; when, therefore, it attracted his attention, he sent some of his body-guard, bidding them observe what the woman would do with the horse. The guards accordingly followed her, and she, when she came to the river, watered the horse, filled her pitcher, and returned by the same way, carrying the water on her head, leading the horse on her

arm, and turning her spindle. Darius, surprised at what he had heard from his spies, and at what he himself had seen, commands them to bring her into his presence ; and he afterwards asks if all the women of that country were as industrious, and receives the reply that such was the case. The motive of the brothers was to show to Darius the peaceful and industrious state of the country they were about to give up to him. The subject contains in a surpassing degree that unaffected simplicity which should at all times belong to works of Sculpture ; and suggests, moreover, thoughts of busy industry and well-earned prosperity. The combined figures of the woman and horse, and the occupation she is engaged in, give ample scope for the imagination of the sculptor in his conception of the beautiful ; while its association with classical days frees him from the danger of vulgar and matter-of-fact treatment. So great is its charm to me, that I think I am not doing wrong in paraphrasing the language of Scripture, and saying to the student : Verily, wherever Art flourishes, this that she has done, shall be shown as a memorial of her. A third subject I would recommend is, Psammetichus offering a libation to the gods in his helmet, in fulfilment of a prophecy that whoever should do so from a brazen bowl should be sole king of Egypt. It will be found in Herodotus's second book, called Euterpe. On this last I may perhaps be mistaken ; but it seems to me, from its half-historical, half-legendary character, peculiarly interesting ; and its (as far as I know) novelty in our Art, and capability of being carried out in a single figure that admits of the nude, renders it altogether suitable to the means of Sculpture. Its belonging, too, to ancient days, frees the sculptor from the necessity of over-attention to details of costume, which is apt to lead him

into the commonplace. My partiality for it as a subject, may be, arises from a certain similarity in it to a magnificent sketch-model of Achilles putting on his helmet, by Banks, which you are, or ought to be, acquainted with. It was never carried out in full, but that was owing to the utter want of taste in the so-called patrons of Art of the day. At any rate, I have given the student in Sculpture who may be unacquainted with the writings of Herodotus, another subject, in this incident of Psammetichus, to think about in his Art.

Our writer, still occupying himself with things connected with the history of Greece and Persia, goes on to relate the well-known anecdote of the neighing of Darius's horse, by which he was elected king of Persia, and records that an equestrian statue was erected in commemoration of the event. He then alludes to the invasion by him of Greece, with his army of seven hundred thousand men ; and afterwards to the invasion by Xerxes, the number of whose followers, according to what is said, was such, that they laid waste the land as they passed by their hunger, and drank up rivers in their thirst ! but who were conquered at last by the Greeks, led on by generals, brave it must be allowed, but not always faithful to their cause. Xerxes' army, as far as we can judge, consisted more of a confused number of camp-followers than of well-disciplined soldiers, and so was weakened by its very numbers, and by the difficulties of supplying them with nourishment. This, you will say, is little to the purpose of my lecture ; but it will serve to show that Herodotus continues the history of the Greeks close up to that period when they were so excellent in Sculpture, and will bring the student in contact with names which will make his heart beat high, if they do not inspire him to the re-

presenting them in his Art : Marathon, Thermopylæ, the Gulf of Salamis, Platea.

You must not for a moment suppose that in this brief notice of our author's writings I have given you every allusion to Art contained in them. Were I to do so, my lecture would become a catalogue of temples, of colossal statues, of figures of the gods seized upon by the inhabitants of one province and restored to their original situations by another, of oracles consulted and afterwards neglected for others, only to serve for further deception. These you must search out for yourselves. The father of history has handed down the record of our Art in its earliest days, and from what he tells you, combined with what you know of it in after times, and of the present day, you may gather much by inference, besides what he positively asserts. He was not an artist himself, and therefore only treats of it generally among other things.

The student should recollect, while studying the parts of Herodotus's history relating to Egypt, what I have already told him—namely, that the old man is in the habit of converting many names belonging to that country, particularly mythological ones, into those of his own people ; whether this was from ignorance or from the vanity said to prevail among all Greek writers, I will not say. The reader will scarcely fail to notice the account given of the building of the Pyramids ; one of them by Cheops, a gentleman, as we are told, of not over-respectable character, though how to define the respectability of his time would be somewhat difficult. We will leave that question alone, and content ourselves with supposing that he was slightly in advance of others, and so became a marked man. Our author says that twenty years were expended in the building of his



pyramid, and explains very clearly the simple mode of raising one stone above another, step by step, until the whole was completed ; and makes us understand how these mighty works, now seeming to us almost impossibilities, were accomplished by the then existing means. The reader will learn, perhaps with a sigh, that they were wrought out by the concentrated energies and life-enduring patience of numberless beings condemned to labour, without hope or reward, by the tyranny of those under whom they had the misfortune to be made captive ; for it was by prisoners of war and by purchased slaves that these great works were carried out.

It may increase, however, your interest in these wonders of the world, if I say that the reading of ancient authors will leave but little doubt on your minds that the labourers on them were, principally, if not wholly, the people from whom we now derive the first tenets of our religion ; who, then but slaves, were the ones to assert, and hold forth, amid the absurdities of idolatry, the grand doctrine of the one invisible God. Of this, however, I shall have to speak hereafter.

The student will possibly not pass over the description given of the Labyrinth, with its three hundred halls, a work of such magnitude that it surpassed the Pyramids. It has since been established from the records that it was built by Amenemha the Third or Mendes. Dr. Lepsius disinterred the ruins, and found it to be a suite of vast halls, such as no building in the world can parallel ; and these halls we may presume were filled with statues. From Labyrinth and Labaris, the name of its builder, the Greeks are said to have invented the word *labares* ; from whence we get the Latin word *labor*, and, again, the English one *labour*.

You will wonder why, when treating principally of Egyptian Art, I should take for my text the writings of a Greek author who lived long after most, if not all, the works he speaks of were executed, and who was at the best but a stranger in the land whose manners and customs he attempts to describe. You will tell me that we have the hieroglyphics cut on the very works themselves, and that the power of translating them has since been discovered by means of the inscription written in three different languages on the Rosetta stone. These hieroglyphics are, it is true, valuable as corroborating, and in many instances amplifying, the Mosaic history of our Holy Scriptures ; where again many allusions to early Art will be found by the diligent searcher. I ought, indeed, to have begun my history of Sculpture from this grandest of all books, and there are ample means in it of doing so ; but I take it for granted that the student is better acquainted with his Bible than with profane authors, and so requires less inducement from me to study it.

The Egyptian hieroglyphics, though highly interesting in connection with written history, convey little or no information with regard to the real constructors of the wonderful tombs or temples to which they belong. I wish they did ; but their object is almost wholly the handing down the names of the kings who reigned in Egypt during their erection ; or rather, I should say, their excavation in the mountains, and whose *corpora vilia* were afterwards laid within them. Though we may give these kings the credit of governing the multitude who slaved at these buildings, it would be absurd to suppose that any artistic merit is due to them. There must undoubtedly have been artists, architects, sculptors, and painters, under them, who understood the sublime and beautiful ; but these,

alas! are rarely, if ever, recorded. There is one exception in the time of Thothmes and Amenophis-Memnon, when the Arts attained a point they never surpassed, and from whence they soon after visibly declined: the name of Thothmes' master-builder is formally recorded on his own tomb, and the workshop in which the statuary for the constructions on which he was engaged was fashioned is the subject of one of the pictures. All the persons employed there, both the superintendents and drudges, are Lower Egyptians and Canaanites. The existing king, his name and title, the victories he gained, or at best the tracing of his descent downwards from the god Amoun, were in most instances the only things thought worthy of record: the rest of the world only existed to serve him, lived only for his purpose, and died at his command without a name. The king was everything,—a god; while the multitude, even the nobles and men of talent, were nothing, and yet had to spend their lives in perpetuating the name and titles of the ruler who enjoyed the credit as well as the luxury that arose out of their efforts.

Over and beyond all this, the indefinite nature of hieroglyphic writing, partly symbolic and partly phonetic, renders very difficult the recording of events in more than a general way. They are, it should be recollected, very primitive in their power of expression. Imitations of positive forms served in most instances instead of conventional signs for conveying ideas, and so were wanting in all those connecting links, such as moods and tenses of verbs, adverbs, conjunctions, &c.; and even these imitated forms, when by themselves, were incapable of recording ideas of an explicit kind. We have lost, besides, to a certain extent, the measurement of time in Egyptian

history ; so that in most cases we can only guess at the probable dates when these buildings were erected or statues executed. Dynasties form but indefinite divisions of time : some measurement of them has been attempted, with no great amount of certainty, and we learn but little from the mere names of those that constituted them, or by being told that they were born of the sun, or were lords of the universe. The Egyptian kings, in consequence, pass like ghosts over the mirror of our mind until we are tired of them, and are apt to exclaim with Macbeth, "I'll see no more !"

These kings all employed themselves in much the same manner—in quelling their Ethiopian or other near enemies. There was High Church and Low Church even in their days, for their wars were, most of them, ostensibly of a religious kind ; but their principal occupation was the excavating the tomb that was eventually to hold them after death. This latter, indeed, seems to have been the chief one of their life, imposed upon them as a religious duty ; and it was to this that they devoted the labour of so many beings. These kings are themselves now almost forgotten, and their lives seem to us merely the tickings of the minute-hand of time.

Apis, the cognomen of one of the shepherd-kings or rulers of Lower Egypt, no longer conveys any impression of dignity or power ; we are satisfied with the mere mention of Mœris and Phiops : though we pause at that of Apophis, as it was in the reign of this Pharaoh that the boy Joseph was sold as a slave, resold to Potiphar, the master of the vineyards, and afterwards became the leading man of his time. Thrown early in life on his own resources, and thus taught self-dependence, statesmanship in him for the first time began

to appear, and mind to predominate over physical force. His name still remains clear and distinct in the annals of the world—has become, in fact, the leading feature in the history of his time, while the stately mummies that surround him, enveloped in their gorgeous clothing, lie forgotten in their graves. He was, in fact, the greatest minister of the old world, for he so managed the resources of Egypt, that he brought everything under the absolute rule of its nominal master, and at the same time maintained peace among all the surrounding tribes that were subject to that rule. The land was mortgaged to Pharaoh Apophis, and the landed gentry, as they would now be called, themselves brought under tribute or taxation. Plenty was in Upper Egypt, amidst want and destitution in the Delta or Arvad ; and so it became the centre of commerce, through the Israelitish Premier—like our great Pitt, a younger scion of his family—who was trained, like most great men, in the Board School of adversity ; yet never losing in all his prosperity those feelings that tend to soften and refine the mind, when thrown in contact with the ingratitude of mankind. Joseph lives, and his heart still palpitates, while those who were his appointed rulers are but stone effigies, wanting both in meaning and in expression. Egypt prospered under him for a time, the Arts flourished in consequence, and tombs, even of the nobles, began to appear and to assume a decorative character.

We may pause here, for we have to draw a long breath again, when we come, at a far distant period, to the mighty king and conqueror who was called in Upper Egypt by the name of Rameses II., and in Lower Egypt, and among the Greeks, by that of Sesostris, and who held the sceptre of both countries in his hand. He, too, established peace through all his dominions ;

in part, as I suspect, by policy, for he is said, while upholding the worship of his own deity, to have avoided all attempts at lowering the religion of those who worshipped other idols, or who differed in any way from him in their belief ; though it was, perhaps, after all, more by suppression than he ruled. Under him Egyptian Art again flourished and prospered. His conquests are almost forgotten—indeed, have assumed at this distance of time so doubtful a character that it is hardly possible to decide their extent or limit. Like our King Arthur, his existence is even doubted ; but at any rate it is clearly shown that, under him or some other tyrant, thousands—it may be said millions—of workmen, bound for life to their employment, were working at the largest temples and at the most colossal statues that were ever carried out by any nation.

We have more figures supposed to represent Rameses or Sesostris than any other ruler of Egypt, and they are larger in size than those of any other king either before or after.

Magnitude, in fact, was in Egyptian Art the way, in all instances, in which the idea of importance was conveyed. I have mentioned to you how it is carried out in the reliefs and frescoes : it was the same with the statues of their kings, and even with those of their gods. Amoun Ra was always made taller, or on a larger scale, than either Osiris, Isis, or any of the other deities ; and it was so with the statues of Rameses II. or Sesostris, who was considered greater than all the other monarchs of Egypt. It was under Sesostris that the Israelites grew to be a great nation, over-spreading the land by their numbers, yet separated from their neighbours by laws of religion and caste. Whether Sesostris extended the same toleration to them as he did to the natives of Middle and Upper Egypt, may be doubtful,

for we begin to hear, in his reign, of extra labour extorted from, and heavy taxes laid upon them.

It is difficult from our point of view to lift up the curtain and look at the other side, while considering the question of their troubles, especially when all our associations, as well as our feelings, are in favour of the sufferers ; yet it is only just to the oppressor to recollect, that their worship of a God, represented by no tangible form, by no figure either in granite or syenite—in fact, invisible as well as incomprehensible—would appear to him, in the midst of his many idols, all varied, yet all acknowledged as representing some supposed quality of the first great cause ;—it would be difficult, I say, for him to look upon the Israelitish creed as mere dissent ; it was to him a belief without form or shape, a worship, but with no tangible object to bow down to, and so must have appeared, in short, downright Atheism. All barbarian nations begin their religious career by the constructing and worshipping of idols, because neither their reason nor their imagination will lead them beyond some visible object placed before them. They are incapable of feeling or understanding that which is not represented to their physical senses, and so require assistance of this kind. Nevertheless, it may be said to be the first reaching upwards, though but a weak one, towards the Divine. No wonder, then, that the Israelites were oppressed with a cruelty that nothing but theological hatred can produce. Take your seat on the throne of Sesostriis, and gaze down from it as he did on the mighty change that was then going on ; narrow your intellect to the limits his was confined in ; look abroad with the eyes with which he saw, —and you will soon find out what I mean. It would be well if you turned out less intolerant than he was. That the Israelites

were cruelly treated, and that many, though not all of them, were slaves, who laboured at the canals, bridges, temples, and other great works, and even on the colossal statues of the time, we have all learned to believe. Imagination would lead us to think that this work must have been distasteful to them from its belonging to a religion not only different from, but thoroughly opposed to their own ; but they were uneducated clowns, who had little power of thought, and so cared nothing about such questions.

Our reading, too, calls to our minds how they turned back in after-times, and, seeking after false gods, made statues for themselves after the manner of their masters. They, too, manufactured them that they might have something before them for their weak thoughts to stretch themselves towards. This capability of producing figures in various materials during their exodus shows me again, in addition to the evidence given by the old authors, that in their previous state of slavery they must have helped in the carving of the gigantic statues which still exist in the land of their bondage. It is possible—nay, not improbable—that the huge fragment of granite supposed to represent Sesostris in our Museum may be their production ; and if the student, while contemplating it, should figure to himself in his imagination the poor Hebrew slave working at it, day after day and year after year, it will not decrease the interest he will feel in it. I have in my previous lectures told you—though perhaps you did not believe me—that there is much of taste that appertains to association. You will ask me to give you proof that these immense statues are slave-work. Here it is : though the students of the Royal Academy must not feel offended if, in order to prove my position, I quote from a part of the hiero-



glyphics, where it is written of the Temple of Carnac, that Thothmes presented, for the completion of that building, bond slaves, men and women, shackled, not with the rules of their Art, but with metal chains, girt about their loins with white linen, and collared with the collar of their country ; and that he afterwards offered, for the building of the avenue of sphinxes, black men and women. These, then, must have been our ancestors in the schools of Art, the sculptors of his day. Whether their keeper was black or white we have no record ; but they could not have been altogether without talent, as they are said to have been procured, bought for the purpose, from other princes. The encouragement they received was certainly not great ; but we must not deceive ourselves with the idea that, because these men were slaves, they were of necessity ill-treated. Under the autocratic government of the old world all men were more or less slaves, were more or less compelled to continue their labours through life for the benefit of rulers under whom they were born, or to whom they had been conveyed by purchase or otherwise ; they considered themselves property, and liable to be bought and sold accordingly. But towards these, as in the case of other goods and chattels, care and a certain amount of kindness was the policy of the possessor ; for by no other means could he obtain the full value out of them. They were probably, like our slaves of the present generation, coaxed and petted while they had health and strength to work, but cast aside, liked a sucked orange, when their strength had faded or their ability vanished.

If we may judge, however, from their conduct generally, the old Egyptian kings had a shorter method of disposing of their old servants than by giving them a retiring pension. The axe

or the bow, with Whig-like economy, relieved them quicker and more effectually from the harassing toils of life. Nor are we justified in fancying that this system of slave-work tended altogether to the deterioration of the quality of their Art. These slaves were doubtless proud of their employment, and knew that they kept a position above that of the ordinary workman by their talent. They had, it is true, no future of fame to look to as a reward for their labour, but, held as they were by a fixed tenure through life, they had no inducement to hasty or incomplete workmanship. Provided they satisfied their owner, it signified little to them how long a job was in hand, or how slowly it progressed; while their master, to whom their support and keep was of little importance, as it cost him next to nothing, was equally indifferent as to the amount of work executed, from his being probably engaged in other occupations of a more attractive nature. It was cheap work to him under any circumstances, and not, after all, work he was much interested in, amid the sensuous luxury with which he was surrounded.

Egyptian Art, as far as the executive part is concerned, may almost be said to be mechanical labour; but, even with it, this indifference to time and cost, caused by these circumstances, produced thorough surface finish, while in the later periods of Greece, when Sculpture became an intellectual employment, it enabled the sculptor to devote time to his production, which in modern days we are unable to do from our having to exist in so expensive an age. Perhaps this is the cause, more than any lack of talent, why we are unable to compete with the beauty of antique Art. I do not find, indeed, that their superiority lies so much in the conception of their work as in the thorough carrying out of it.

That much in Egyptian Art has come from the hands of workmen comparatively uneducated will be more readily credited if you consider for a moment. I have already said that there must have been superintending it well-informed minds, who arranged the general design, and who understood the sublime and beautiful. To believe that these qualities could spring up from any other source would be almost as absurd as to believe, like the materialist, that lifeless atoms are born and unite themselves to produce life by mere chance. It would be futile to suppose that either Egypt, Greece, or Rome, or even Kensington itself, could produce the sublime and beautiful except from the mental resources from which they are derived, and it would be equally futile to deny their existence in Egyptian Art. Their masters had their canons of Art, their rules of proportion, and other things which constitute the beautiful, and, guided by them, they wrought out their ideal and gave it being. But they could not have worked upon the granite with their own hands: the material was too hard, the figures or columns too large. The execution required a life; it was, besides, so mechanical in style, and the figures so immense in size, that excellence was in no way the result of what we now lay such emphasis on, the touch of the master. Egyptian statues were, as far as we can judge, wrought out by masons, assisted by what we technically call templets. The outlines of the two sides were squared from head to foot by these guides, and a centre line was marked between them by which the front was bevelled off in the same mechanical manner, so that each should correspond. Or the reverse might have been the case; that is to say, the front and back profile might have been produced at first, and the sides from a centre in the same way.

There is a small unfinished figure of a lion in the British Museum, with lines and divisions marked upon it as guides to the workman, which seems to me to indicate that this was their method. This mode of working will account for the total absence of variety in the two halves of their figures, and again for the architectural truth which is produced in them. Beyond these two points there is little in the execution of Egyptian Sculpture : it is simply surface-making ; the features are treated mechanically, there is scarcely any anatomy, the fingers even of each hand correspond with those of the other ; yet the hardness of the material, the polished accuracy of the surface, the enormous amount of space laboured on, all speak, not of genius, but of patient toil—of lives spent in an employment to which destiny had bound them, and from which there was no hope of departure.

Yet none of us look with an indifferent eye on Egyptian Sculpture. The Art-antiquarian gazes on it with almost the same feeling as the geologist does on the megatherium, the plesiosaurus, and other gigantic creatures of the pre-Adamite world. The enormous dimensions of Egyptian statues seem to associate them with such ideas ; and their placid yet impassive expression removes them from all connection with after-times. Yet they were true to the period to which they belonged, for they represented an impassive age. Civilization stood still or was hardly born, mankind made no progress, and time, from the loss of record, seems now to us a sort of motionless eternity. Still they contain, like the immense beings of the old world, their principles of the sublime, if not of the beautiful—mystery, vastness, formality, and multiplied repetition of the same idea ; and by these means their suggestiveness becomes indefinite,

and so self-creative. Could, however, these petrified old Art-remains, embedded as they are in the impenetrable oblivion which time has accumulated over them, once again speak, they would bear witness to the day when, under the dominion of their weakest and most cruel Pharaoh, Sethos II., their land was shaken as with an earthquake, and a nation passed out from between them, leaving the Arvad, the Delta or Lower Egypt, almost desolate of inhabitants, but carrying before them in their journey a light that was to dispel ever after the darkness of their age, and to commence a new history of mankind, a new phase of the mind, and, I may add from this desk, a new era in Art.

I have taken you thus far in the history of Sculpture, but the want on my part of the necessary time for study will prevent my following the subject further this season, but I hope to go on with it next year. You will say, perhaps, that in what I have as yet given you, I have hardly brought you to the beginning of our journey through the history of Sculpture. True; but the journey is a long one, though at the same time a very enjoyable one, to those who have health and strength to travel it; and even in the wild prairies we have passed through, where the roads are hardly discernible, there is a charm to me almost irresistible. We shall come to more visible tracks and more frequented places when we proceed onward, as I propose to do at a future day, if allowed. I have been, I must confess, a sad gossip by the roadside, but, if so, it is not that I am like the school-boy, "creeping, with snail-like pace, unwillingly to school," but rather that I am an idle vagabond who has held you by the button listening to his babbling talk when you ought to have been making greater progress on your way. I have

come in contact with so many things lying on the margin of our path, that I have been unable to keep my eyes from them and proceed straightforward to the end ; and I have, perhaps, made the mistake of fancying that what is interesting to me must be so to the Royal Academy student. Like all sinners I shall endeavour to lay the blame on someone else, and so will say that I have been led astray by Herodotus himself, whose writings I have taken for my text. He is a sad gossip—worse than I am—often about little things, though more often on matters of importance. He is, too, not always regular as to dates, and so mixes up events of the past with those of his own day. I have, perhaps, done the like ; but you will perceive here again that it is he, and not I, that is to blame. I have finished with the old man's book for the present, and so may abuse him ; but, before closing it, will say to the student, read him for the sake of your Art, as well as for the sake of that general knowledge which I wish you to possess. If he appears to you dry and uninteresting at first, he will be found on closer study enticing in his subjects, from the indistinct manner in which they are brought before you at this far-removed period, and from the powerful pictures of antique manners and customs he puts before you. The facts he relates assume in themselves the air of poetry, from the misty halo distance has thrown over them, and from their coming in such close contact with fables of so improbable and imaginative a character. It is difficult to believe that so keen an observer of what came under his own eye could have been so credulous of the many tales told him in his travels ; but the almost impossibility of thoroughly putting ourselves back to his age will always make us incompetent judges on that question. The

Sculptor who would gain a knowledge of the history of his Art, and would at the same time cultivate his imagination—for it will grow by feeding, as well as his judgment—should not be without some acquaintance with the writings of Herodotus.





#### LECTURE XVII.

### THE EARLY HISTORY OF SCULPTURE.

PLINY.



GREEK Philosophy, in the persons of Socrates and his scholars, Plato, Aristotle, and others, stood at its summit, coeval with the most successful attainments of Greek Art, 400 years before Christ, and hence the many allusions made to Sculpture by those writers : but it is in the Roman author, Pliny, who lived during the first century after Christ, that we find the more direct memoranda of still existing works. Between these two periods, the Arts, through the decay of Greece and the uplifting of Rome, 146 years before Christ, had been transferred by conquest and plunder to the latter country ; not only had the works been carried off, but the artists themselves had emigrated thither.

Many of the fine examples now used for the purpose of instruction in our Academy were in fact executed by Greek sculptors in Rome, or the neighbouring cities of Italy, within that time. We shall, therefore, not perhaps be spending our evening amiss, if we examine the records of Art left by Pliny. He was, as far as we can gather, a man of a most searching spirit, and



regardless of danger, even of the most formidable kind, when seeking for knowledge,—as witness his conduct at Vesuvius, by the eruption of which, according to his nephew, he met his death—a death which has become the more interesting at this moment, from the circumstance that it was caused by the very eruption of the mountain which buried the two cities from whence have lately been disinterred so many treasures of Art. These treasures bear witness to the truth of his writings, and are become appropriate illustrations of his book; so that if you will not believe him now, it may in reality be said of you, “Neither would you believe, though one rose from the dead.” A certain obesity of person rendered him inactive in his movements, and this obesity, coupled, perhaps, with an excess of mental labour, seems to have produced in him, as it very often does, a despondency of feeling which may be traced in the opinions expressed in his writings. For instance, in his seventh book, entitled, “Man: his birth, his organization, and the invention of the Arts,” he says: “Our first attention is justly due to man, for whose sake all other things appear to have been produced by Nature; though, on the other hand, with so great and so severe penalties for the enjoyment of her bounteous gifts, that it is far from easy to determine whether she has proved to him a kind parent or a merciless step-mother. In the first place, she obliges him alone, of all animated beings, to clothe himself with the spoils of the others; while to all the rest she has given various kinds of coverings, such as shells, crusts, spines, hides, furs, bristles, hair, down, feathers, scales, and fleeces. The very trunks of the trees even she has protected against the effects of heat and cold by a bark, which is, in some cases, twofold. Man alone, at

the very moment of his birth, cast naked upon the naked earth, does she abandon to cries, to lamentations, and—a thing that is the case with no other animal whatever—to tears : this, too, from the very moment that he enters upon existence. But as for laughter, why, by Hercules !—to laugh, if but for an instant only, has never been granted to man before the fortieth day from his birth, and then it is looked upon as a miracle of precocity. Introduced thus to the light, man has fetters and swathings instantly put upon all his limbs—a thing that falls to the lot of none of the brutes, even that are born among us. Born to such singular good fortune, there lies the animal which is destined to command all the others ; lies, fast bound, hand and foot, and weeping aloud ! such being the penalty which he has to pay on beginning life, and that for the sole fault of having been born. Alas ! for the folly of those who can think, after such a beginning as this, that they have been born for the display of vanity. The earliest presage of future strength, the earliest bounty of time, confers upon him naught but the resemblance to a quadruped. How soon does man gain the power of walking ? How soon does he gain the faculty of speech ? How soon is his mouth fitted for mastication ? How long are the pulsations of the crown of his head to proclaim him the weakest of all animated beings ? And then the diseases to which he is subject, the numerous remedies which he is obliged to devise against his maladies, and those thwarted every now and then by new forms and features of disease ! While other animals have an instinctive knowledge of their natural powers—some of their swiftness of pace, some of their rapidity of flight, and some again of their power of swimming—Man is the only one that knows nothing—that can learn nothing without being

taught : he can neither speak, nor walk, nor eat, and, in short, he can do nothing, at the prompting of Nature only, but weep. For this it is that many have been of opinion that it were better not to have been born, or if born, to have been annihilated at the earliest possible moment."

This and much more that follows is, you will say, not of a very cheerful character, nor is it altogether true, for it is a one-sided view ; it merely indicates the man who wrote it as low-spirited, somewhat soured and misanthropic in his feelings. Nevertheless, considering the age in which he lived, he seems to have been of a most comprehensive mind, and thoroughly honest in his seeking after truth, and the hours he devoted to that seeking are said to have been far beyond those which in most cases human weakness permits. That he accumulated an immense amount of learning, both scientific and artistic, by this assiduity, we have evidence from what has been handed down to us—a part only, and perhaps a very small one, of what he wrote. Where he speaks of events of his own time, or of things ascertained from his own research, he may be depended on, though when relating from hearsay or tradition, he is, like most ancient authors, a long way from infallible. His writings on the natural sciences are consequently little more than mere assertions, accepted without inquiry, of things supposed to have been observed by others, and exaggerated in the carrying from one to another until they have lost all connection with truth, if they ever had any, and have become simply amusing from their miraculous or otherwise absurd nature. This may be accounted for when we recollect that Science was in his days in its infancy, if indeed the word infancy does not express too advanced a state to be correct. Not so

with Art : that had even in some respects passed its prime, was comparatively familiar to everyone, and an object of very considerable interest at the time and in the place in which he lived. He speaks here in a great measure of what he knows, and we may consequently, with some degree of safety, follow him. His "Natural History," the only part of his writings now known, is most comprehensive : it seems to strive at taking everything within its grasp, and treats *de omnibus rebus et quibusdam aliis*. What was said indeed of a late Master of Trinity, Dr. Whewell, will apply with equal force to our author : that Science was his forte and Omniscience his foible. Yet he must have had, I should say, what the phrenologists call the bump of order strongly developed ; for we find everything in its proper place, and under its proper title, so that reference can be easily made to any subject when required—a true sign of real industry. The consequence of this is, that he makes but little reference to the Arts, one of the chief points on which he touches, until we come to the chapters regularly devoted to them ; yet observations on them creep in incidentally now and then in other parts. For instance, in his dedication of his work to Titus Vespasian, he says : "That I may not, however, appear to inveigh so completely against the Greeks, I should wish to be considered under the same point of view with those inventors of the Arts of Painting and Sculpture whose works, although they are so perfect that we are never satisfied with admiring them, are inscribed with a temporary title, such as—'Apelles, or Polycletus, was doing this :' implying that the work was only commenced, and still imperfect, and that the artist might have benefited by the criticisms made upon it, and have altered any part that required it, if he had not been prevented by death. It is also a

great mark of their modesty; that they inscribed their works as if they were the last which they had executed, and as still in hand at the time of their death. I think there are but three works of Art which are inscribed positively with the words 'such an one executed this;' of these I shall give an account in the proper place. In these cases it appears that the artist felt the most perfect satisfaction with his work, and hence these pieces have excited the envy of everyone." These are his words, and we have here evidence of the extreme care that was bestowed on works of Art in those days, of the length of time devoted to single efforts, and of the severe criticisms they had to undergo when finished, from a well-instructed and art-loving public. Further on he relates that "a comet appeared in Rome during the time when the Emperor Augustus was celebrating games in honour of Venus Genatrix, not long after the death of his father, Cæsar. The common people supposed the star to indicate that the soul of Cæsar was admitted among the immortal gods: under which designation it was that the star was placed on the bust lately consecrated in the Forum." What an event it would be should we ever be lucky enough to find this bust with the comet, or hairy star as he calls it, marked upon it. I fear, however, we shall not have that luck. As he proceeds he says that Alexander declared that no one should paint his portrait except Apelles, and no one make a marble statue of him except Pyrgolites, or a bronze one except Lysippus. Then comes a mention of Praxiteles, who he declares has been ennobled by his works in marble, especially by his Cnidian Venus, for which, King Nicomedes offered to pay off a large debt the Cnidians owed.

This is followed by a naming of the Olympian Jupiter, which

Pliny declares to bear testimony day by day to the talents of Phidias ; and of the Capitoline Jupiter, and Diana of Ephesus, which do the same for the sculptor Mentor, who seems to have been noted for the making of vases. In his history of the elephant—to which he attributes far more reasoning powers and more miraculous doings than, I think, either Cuvier or Professor Owen would quite sanction—he alludes to the value of the tusk of the animal for the making, as he says, of the statues of the gods—an observation which seems to suggest that this costly material was considered sacred to the representations of the immortals. We have, indeed, frequent reference made to the great ivory Jupiter and Minerva, but I know of none recording a statue of any mortal executed in that valuable substance, nor have we, unfortunately, any existing example of such sculpture in either case.

In his writings on the cultivation of the vine, and on agriculture generally—where he is, as you will readily understand, the most accurate, and speaking entirely from his own experience, the most profound—he makes mention of a figure of Jupiter, executed, he says, from the stem of the vine, which he declares to be the toughest and most durable of all woods for the purpose of the carver, and alludes to the statue of Diana of Ephesus—the one, I presume, named in the Scriptures. He speaks, too, of a slave who was cured of the effects of a fall by the virtues of a plant revealed to Pericles by Minerva, and from that circumstance named *Parthenium*, and says that a famous statue in bronze was made of him, well known as the *Splanchnoptes*, or cooker of entrails.

There are, besides, various other casual allusions to Sculpture, even among these portions of his works. He gives, too, in them numerous hints by which an artist, if he puts them well

together, may gain for himself a tolerable conception of that coarse, sensual state of luxury to which the Romans had arrived, and of which Pliny was a strong rebuker. So that I would advise the student to read his books quite through : he will find them amusing, if only for the many fables and miraculous events that are introduced into them, and perhaps wonder that so much credence should be given to such absurdities in connection with learning of such an accurate kind ; but great allowance must be made for the early age in which the author lived, and for the dark ignorance then existing. Pliny was, in truth, a man far before his time, and much that he treated of—Science, for instance—was still quite in its embryo. He was, too, a great quoter of and collector from other men's works, and often, as I have before said to you, treated of matters belonging to previous days, depending solely on the authority of more ancient writers—in short, a great book-maker.

You must not, however, come altogether to the conclusion that he believes in all that he writes ; on the contrary, he generally, when recording superstitions and other kinds of fallacies, begins by saying, it is related that so-and-so happened ; sometimes, indeed, he openly avows his disbelief, and often shows a power of reasoning and research quite incompatible with such belief. He evidently doubted much, as perhaps do all thinking men, and even in these days we ourselves find quite enough to doubt upon.

I must go on, however, to the latter part of his works, where he devotes himself entirely to the history of the Arts, as it is with these we have more particularly to do ; what I have already handed to you are only the stray crumbs of information that have fallen, so to speak, out of their place.

He begins, even here, in his usual lugubrious manner. In describing gold as a metal, he says, "Would that it could have been banished for ever from the earth, accursed by universal report," and adds, "How much more happy the age when things themselves were bartered for one another, as was the case in the time of the Trojan war." He then goes on to censure the over-luxury of his fellow-countrymen, and has a hit at their foppery by saying that "The worst crime against mankind was committed by him who was the first to put a ring upon his fingers." He proceeds, then, with some valuable observations on the wearing of these "accursed" rings as then practised, whether for the purpose of a signet, or for mere ornament. There is, too, a sly satire in that sentence where he says, "Whoever it was that first introduced the use of rings, did so not without hesitation, for he placed this ornament on the left hand, the hand which is generally concealed under the folds of the toga; whereas if he had been sure of its being an honourable distinction it would have been made more conspicuous on the right." I must stop, as my object in this lecture is not to touch upon everything, but to persuade the student to read the work for himself; he will find, I can assure him, ample to repay the search.

The interest of what he asserts under the heading of gold is, however, great, not merely from the anecdotes he introduces to show how avarice had increased by the discovery and use of the metal—such as Septimulius having cut off his father Caius Gracchus' head, upon which a price had been set of its weight in gold, and of his having filled it with lead, and so committed the greater crime of cheating the State, as well as the lesser one of parricide—but Pliny gives accounts, correct in the main,



though mixed up with some superstitions, of the different methods of mining for it, and the various uses of it as ornament or otherwise. He tells us that previous to the time of Servius, raw metal served the purposes of coin, and that that ruler was the first to make an impress, that of a sheep, upon it; hence the word "*pécunia*," from *pecus*, sheep. The first statue made of solid gold is named too as that of Amaitis, an Indian goddess; and then, in a few pages beyond, instruction is given on the use of various vegetable and mineral substances in painting, some of which had in his time evidently been pronounced objectionable from their want of durability. With this part of his treatise on the Arts I have, however, nothing to do.

It is in the 34th book that the numerous names of artists, principally sculptors, occurs, and a catalogue of noted works is given. The invention of the arch is attributed by him to the Greeks, though, as you know, the use of it by them was for some time doubted. Some discussion as to the proper mixture of the celebrated Corinthian brass takes place, from which it appears that the secret of the mixture had already been lost, and that old specimens were caught up by collectors in consequence, whether for the sake of the beauty of workmanship or of the metal does not appear quite certain. Much of the decorative furniture of the houses was made of this brass—couches, lamp-stands, &c.—and rich men evidently felt a pride in exhibiting them to their friends as objects of *vertu*. The custom of honouring with statues those who had been thrice successful in the Olympic games is referred to. *Iconicæ* are alluded to, or portrait statues as they were called, because the proportions and general characteristics of the individual were imitated; I doubt, however, if an exact likeness was attempted, but fancy they

merely represented those peculiarities of form which had enabled them to obtain the victory, whether of strength or activity in those contests. We find, in fact, numerous instances of works of this kind, neither quite ideal, nor altogether individual in their character, where likeness is rather approached than quite accomplished: the noted statue of the Discobolus, with its peculiar action, is supposed to represent the particular mode of flinging the quoit by some noted player, and may not improbably be of this kind. It is afterwards said that Pythagoras of Requin executed the statue of Astylos the Runner, who had been successful the necessary number of times in the Olympic games; and we have in the Vatican a figure which is called by the name of the Runner, a youth using the body-scraper on his arms after the race. Pliny mentions several statues by different sculptors in this action—this among the rest, I believe, for it is supposed to be the one of Lysippus, which Agrippa had erected in front of his warm baths, but which was afterwards removed by Tiberius to his bedchamber, and replaced through the people clamouring for its restoration. I can hardly imagine that the English people would make a great outcry were the best statue they possess removed from their sight; but I can say that if ever a work deserved this compliment it is this one alluded to in Pliny, and now, as I have before said, standing in the Vatican. Its form is of the finest kind, that of Nature in the first elasticity of her youth, with all the full development of muscle which results from perfect health and a thoroughly active life. The athlete is standing with an air of quiet triumph, without any affectation, yet conscious alike of the high distinction he has earned and of the manly elegance of frame he possesses; his arm outstretched, while he relieves it from the effects of the

fatigue he has undergone by the instrument I have mentioned. So perfect is its beauty that it might well serve to represent the primeval Adam, on

“That day which saw him bright and sinless stand,  
Image of God, from God’s creative hand.”

It will show how much this statue was valued by the ancients, with what devotion beauty was worshipped, and how little mere imitation, or deceiving of the senses, was looked to, if I tell you that a long and heavy bar of marble resting on the thigh and attached as a support to the arm, is left for the sake of safety; a sad disfigurement if looked upon as a mere effort at imitation of Nature, but beauty had been attained by the effort of the chisel, and it was thought wise to preserve it at whatever cost. The result is, that it is, I believe, the only antique statue we have in which scarcely any part is lost—the fingers only are, I believe, a restoration by Tenerani. The legs might be criticized by some as being a degree too long, but to me they do not appear so; on the contrary, they serve as evidence of what I have before put to you—namely, that there is no exact scale of proportion, either in Nature or the Antique, that will at all times, and under all circumstances, serve for the standard of beauty, but that, on the contrary, slight deviations are resorted to in order to convey the particular character intended. In this instance the Runner has long legs.

The discoveries from Pompeii, Herculaneum, and other parts of Italy have of late years been so numerous that the collection we have in our Academy forms now only a very small portion of the first-class antiques known. The gallery at Naples is alone an *embarras de richesse* in this respect. Though I remember well how I wandered about this statue of the Runner

when in Rome, looking at it from all sides, and unable to get away from it, I must not now linger too long upon it, but must get again into the groove I have marked out for myself—Pliny's Records of Ancient Art. There are names of artists almost innumerable, and descriptions of pictures that possessed marvellous power, according to the writer; though that is no proof of their excellence, as opinions on Art are always founded on comparison. The man who never sees really good Art pronounces the best that comes under his notice as the *ne plus ultra* of excellence. In some respects, however, the paintings of ancient Greece and Rome must have been truly fine, as less grace of line, less good drawing, or less power of composition than is found in their sculptures, would not have been tolerated by the common people, not to speak of the professed critics.

The celebrated statue of the Splanchnoptes is again spoken of as the slave roasting entrails, and kindling the fire with his breath, and is said to be the work of Stypax of Cyprus, who acquired his celebrity by this work alone. Silanion is recorded as having made a statue of Apollodorus, who was himself a modeller, and, as Pliny says, not only the most diligent of all in the study of his Art, but a most severe criticizer of his own works, frequently breaking his statues to pieces when he had finished them, and never able to satisfy his intense passion for the Art: a circumstance that procured him the surname of the madman. Indeed, it is this expression which he has given to his works, which represent, in metal, embodied anger, rather than the lineaments of a human being. This is what Pliny tells us, and I suppose I must give this same Apollodorus credit for being something of a sculptor, though I confess I

have some doubts about him ; he seems by the description to be one of those men of whom we have too many among us even now : men of momentary impulse, always ready to begin, yet without perseverance enough to complete—no proof, to my mind, of great genius. It is not in the always beginning, but in the considering and reconsidering of a work, and in the thorough carrying out of it, that strength is displayed, and in no Art is this strength more requisite than in Sculpture. Perhaps he was one of those men whose knowledge of the theory of his Art and whose feeling for its beauty was so intense, that nothing in what he would call the mechanical part could come up to his ideas. So indeed Pliny seems to describe him, and I think, in doing so, shows him to have been a mere pretender—writes him down an ass. I don't believe in Master Apollodorus. Other names follow of more sound repute, though less remarked upon, because less eccentric ; after which come some very explicit, and, I believe, very correct directions for the mixing of metals for bronze statues—pretty much the same as what is now adopted ; for silver-lead read tin, and I believe they will be found identical. He then turns to decorative painting, and laments the decay of that branch by the substituting of inlaid marbles on the walls of the palaces. “We must begin to paint the very stone itself,” he says ; adding that, “this Art was invented in the reign of Claudius, but it was in the time of Nero that we discovered the method of inserting in marble, spots that do not belong to it, so as to vary its uniformity.” He deplores most bitterly the fall of Art, more particularly in correct portraiture, and seems to think that more value was put on foreign work than was due to it, and that men valued rich material more than good work : he compares his own day in

regard to taste with old times; so that the ancient Romans must have had, not only their *cognoscenti* but their old masters.

*Tempora non mutantur.*

You do not want me, I dare say, to tell you that the many busts of Homer, and perhaps of many other poets as well, are really not portraits at all, but ideal conceptions—they harmonize, indeed, so thoroughly with our inward notions of the blind old bard that it is scarcely possible there can be any individuality in them; they may have been, like Sir Joshua Reynolds's Count Ugolino, suggested by the head of some old rough-haired mendicant, but they are only like the real Homer in the same way as is that visionary figure we call up before us when he tunes his lyre and sings,

“ Achilles' wrath, to Greece the direful spring  
Of woes unnumber'd, heavenly goddess sing.”

If you have any doubts, however, they will vanish on reading the following passage from the writer to whom I am now endeavouring to coax you, where he says: “ There is a new invention, too, which we must not omit to notice. Not only do we consecrate in our libraries, in gold or silver, or at all events in bronze, those whose immortal spirits hold converse with us in those places, but we even go so far as to reproduce the ideal of features, all remembrance of which has ceased to exist; and our regrets give existence to likenesses that have not been transmitted to us, as in the case of Homer for example.”

Ancestral portraits were much the rage in the days of Cicero. The halls of the nobles were filled with them, and the removal of these biographical memoirs of the resident families was forbidden, even when a sale of the property took place. What those portraits consisted of is not, however, clear; they are said

to have been modelled in wax, coloured, perhaps, to the life ; so that Madame Tussaud may, after all, claim a longer descent for her mode of Art than we imagine. In all probability they were of this kind of effigy—not, perhaps, with real clothes on their backs, but coloured models, as it is recorded that they stood in niches in the house, and that the whole of them were called out to attend upon the funeral of every member of the family who took it into his head to die. Perhaps they were not life-size, and if so may not have created a ludicrous effect in the procession ; at any rate, they had no great expectations from the death of their dear relative, and so really behaved themselves with apparent propriety, and took to themselves their fair proportion of grief.

M. Varro is mentioned as having first conceived the idea of illustrating literary works by portraits, supposed to have been relievos in metal coloured by minium, a favourite red tint of the Romans. All this Pliny laments having passed away.

You do not expect me to go through with you the long line of artists—painters and sculptors and architects—which Pliny enumerates : an army in themselves, for they count by hundreds, some still known to us, not only by name, but by existing works ; others long forgotten, though probably of well-deserved reputation in their day. This number alone will show in what favour Art was then held, and what importance it had attained. Neither can I give you the titles of all their works, nor even the anecdotes that are attached to them, or comments passed upon them—often amusing, and still oftener suggestive and instructive.

The careless reader will not improbably put down our author as an ignorant exaggerator of facts, and a compiler of

absurd fables ; forgetting that he has had to write, in most cases, of things belonging to some centuries before his own time, how much of superstition and credulity he had to contend with, and how difficult it was in those dark days to hand down the feeble lamp of knowledge from one generation to another without its being extinguished by the breath of forgetfulness. I trust, however, I am not addressing careless readers, but rather those who combine thinking with reading—who do not merely glance at a book, but endeavour to search out its meaning ; and I am sure these will, not from any one sentence, but from a proper combination of the whole, and a comparison of one part with another, arrive at a correct idea of the then state of Art, of the style at which it aimed, and of the point of excellence at which it had arrived. That the student must, at the same time, learn much that will be useful to him, whether in his profession or otherwise, it is scarcely necessary for me to say, though that will depend on his power of reasoning and of applying it to his own purpose. He will read many references to works in Sculpture with which he is acquainted, as well as many things which he has only heard of through ancient authors. He will find praises given for excellence in Painting that will serve to indicate to him how far that Art had advanced, and with what difficulties it was still contending. Efforts at novelty and varied modes of expression, now every-day doings, are lauded almost as miracles, and recorded as having served to establish the fame of the discoverer as a leader in Art ; whilst qualities of the very highest order, and, as we are apt to fancy, belonging to a much later period, are mentioned as exciting the admiration of the gazing multitude. The student has to reconcile to himself these apparent contradictions, but he will bring them together after



a while. He will learn to feel that old Greek Painting was, like the Sculpture, simple in its means, never running after facile trickeries of touch, over-complication of lines, or startling effects of chiaro-oscuro and colour, but looking steadily at the one idea it had to express, and subduing all its means, rather than ostentatiously displaying them, so that that idea might stand forward unalloyed by any of those professional mannerisms or affectations of power so prevalent in modern Art.

Style was subservient to the subject, rather than the subject a vehicle for the style. That an elegant and expressive outline was the thing chiefly depended on, is shown by the well-known anecdote of Apelles having called on Protogenes in his absence, and made a line on a panel to signify who had been there, and of the latter having recognized his visitor by it, and made another close to it as a sort of challenge, which Apelles accepted by making another still more delicate and expressive on his second visit.

This, indeed, appears to me the chief difference between good ancient and good modern Art. In the latter, the contour is often correct to nature, but not often so refined and select in its kind. If you read attentively you will find in Pliny the passage relating to the statue of Apollo the Deliverer, that induced your Flaxman to believe, not, perhaps, incorrectly, that the celebrated figure of the Belvidere handed down to us is a copy from a bronze; its composition may have led him also to that belief, and other authors may have helped to corroborate it.

Chantrey, in what he fancied his more common-sense way of thinking, used to ridicule this opinion of Flaxman's, as unsupported by sound argument; but I am inclined to think the

little learned man was right, and am certain that a want of education does not necessarily confer, either what is called common sense, or a power of deciding an argument. The reader of Pliny will, at any rate, doubt the originality of the work, if he does not go directly against it ; he will doubt also some things which he may regret to doubt—he will no longer be certain that the great Socrates was a sculptor, as well as a philosopher, or even the son of a sculptor, as he is sometimes stated to have been. I do not say that he was not—I hope that he was, for the glory of the Art—but there appear to have been many of the name,—one, a painter. The glorious old conservative and economical Pliny will tell you also that M. Scaurus was the first to use foreign marble for the columns of his house, and who was the first to employ it in public buildings ; luxuries which he regrets, with a heavy sigh, the laws did not restrain, and classes among the luxurious follies of the day, exclaiming, “ Can we say that there is now anything we have reserved for the exclusive use of the gods ? ” I have spoken of him in the first part of my lecture as a man far before his time, and I still feel that he was : indeed, I cannot help fancying what a grand First Commissioner of Works he would make if we could but have him now. There is, however, no use regretting an impossibility—we must be contented as we are : so I will go on to say that he records the Lizard-killer, so well known to you, and the group of the Laocoon and Sons, pronouncing the latter to be superior to any work, either of Painting or Sculpture, then known. He describes, too, the coloured Minerva and Olympian Jupiter of Phidias, as well as gives the size of many other gigantic statues, the Colossus of Rhodes included. What is more to my present purpose, he indicates the plan, and gives the history of the

building of the celebrated monument raised by Artemisia to her husband, Mausolus, at Halicarnassus, and says of it that it was reckoned as one of the seven wonders of the world. It is not only more particularly interesting to us just now as a magnificent work raised by a widowed queen to the memory of her husband, but because we have in our Museum the magnificent fragments that are left of it—fragments, it is true, but sufficient, if not to convey the design of the whole, to impress us with the grand style of Art employed upon it. I would advise the sculptor-student to attentively study them: they are near at hand, and he can do so without any difficulty; and, go as far as he may, he will find nothing more exciting to his genius or more instructive in his Art. The figure of Mausolus alone, broken and dilapidated as it is, is one of the finest portrait-statues known: look how grandly he stands, with what dignity the head is posed! how simple in its line, and yet how rich in its foldings is the drapery! Michael Angelo is said to have uttered the word "March!" when standing before the statue of St. George, but the impulse when gazing at the statue of Mausolus is to say, "Speak!" I wish it would, for I am sure nothing light or trivial could be uttered from such a thoughtful countenance. He might, perhaps, say to the young sculptors of the present age, "See with what simple means, with what breadth of parts my artist has delineated my face; with how little he has obtained the profound expression of my features; display of execution has never interfered with the sentiment or effect he wished to convey by the whole."

You will hardly believe me if I tell you that the statue has often said this to me when I have stood before him; so often, that I have sometimes thought he wished to taunt me with the want of the quality in my own works. I must ask him the next

time we meet, who was the sculptor of his statue, for it appears that there were no less than five employed on the monument altogether : Scopas, Bryaxis, Timotheus, and Leochares,—the name of the fifth is not given.

I can give you no rule, no directions, by which the dignity, the thoughtful expression, the grandeur of pose in this statue of Mausolus is conveyed—you must endeavour to feel it yourself; if you cannot do that, you have not in you the essence of your Art. Unaffected simplicity is the foundation, self-concentration the superstructure of the work, but these words convey but feebly its excellence. Study it, and endeavour to enter thoroughly into it, and to understand the principles by which it obtains such complete mastery over the mind of the spectator. You will not then be able, perhaps, to describe in words the merits that are in it, but you may be able to imitate them in your own works, and thus follow the example of the man who, when called upon to define the word walking, began to walk himself.

Various attempts have been made to restore from the fragments left to us, and from the description handed down to us by Pliny, the whole monument ; among others, by a most respected member of this Academy, Charles Cockerell, who has published a work on the subject. This will show you how beneficial in their profession men before us have found the study of these old authors. There was no one whose taste was purer, or who was better acquainted with the history of his Art, than the late Professor of Architecture whom I have just named. The theory he had laid down for himself, and which he was called upon to set forth to the pupils, was sound, because he had formed it by a comparison with that of others—had read what others had written and thought upon it—and so did not com-

mit the error many of us are apt to do, especially in the after-part of life, repeat one's own ideas, or in other words feed upon ourselves. I would advise the sculptor-student trying to restore the single figure. The parts are sufficiently dilapidated to admit of much invention being used in the repairing and bringing them together, and I think the effort will recompense him for his trouble, by increasing his knowledge of the severe style that runs through it. Should I ever have the opportunity, I intend to propose the restoration of it as the subject for the medal annually offered by the Academy in that department.

The authorities of the British Museum have attempted in a highly creditable manner the making good the wanting parts of another figure belonging to the same monument; the plaster restoration is placed beside the mutilated original, so that a very instructive lesson may be gained by a comparison of the two thus put together. There is also, I am happy to say, a plaster cast of the head of Mausolus placed down nearer the eye, so that the sculptor-student may obtain a knowledge of the treatment by means of which the severe thoughtful expression is secured. I would advise his not neglecting it, for very few better lessons can be learned by him; it contains within itself the key to the style of the whole statue, and a man must be blind indeed who does not perceive how few, how simple in themselves, are all the parts,—how everything is omitted that does not help that expression, or would tend in any way to disturb it. Go to our Museum as often as you can—it is becoming a very fine one in your Art: there are hundreds of instructors there who will speak to you in one harmonious chant; and if one of them be out of tune, though it is rarely that they are, it will be hard if your ear is not good enough to detect the false note.





THE SUPPLIANT. An Ideal Work.

*H. Weekes, R.A.*



#### LECTURE XVIII.

### THE EARLY HISTORY OF SCULPTURE.

#### THE SCRIPTURES.



CULPTORS have to recollect that their work is sometimes judged by other tests than that of artistic excellence ; their brethren may look upon it by that light, but other men may perhaps try it by other means, and apply to it knowledge of a different kind. Most people, in fact, examine everything that comes before them by a certain scale which they have found infallible in that to which they have devoted the study of their lives. I am induced to make this remark from my recollection of a criticism uttered to me by a Jewish rabbi on a group in Sculpture representing the Temptation of Eve. He admired the work generally, but declared there was one mistake in it : the serpent should have been represented with legs, as otherwise the curse laid upon it in consequence of the act—"Upon thy belly shalt thou go"—would have been as nothing. Strange as the remark may seem, I feel strongly that it was a correct one ; at any rate it was correct when tried by the test he had applied to it, the Bible.

My remembrance too of the conversation, when a sort of



envious wish came over me for the same power that he had of diving into the history of the past, induces me to believe that it may afford you some amusement, and some instruction, if we go together this evening through that same Bible, and search out the various allusions to our Art found within it. They are not perhaps many, nor are they singly of much value ; but if collected and bound together they may, not improbably, like the old man's bundle of sticks, gain strength by the conjunction, and assume a more important as well as more distinct character. I may as well tell you at once that we must make use of every mention made, whether metaphorically or as recording a fact ; and we have a perfect right to do so, for metaphor must have a pre-existence in facts, or otherwise it fails in its expression. At the same time I fear our research will, after all, be but a slight one, as the proposition to go through a record like the Bible in less than an hour, seems second only to Puck's, of putting a girdle round the earth in forty minutes.

There will be one advantage, however, to us over other commentators—we have no doctrine to promulgate, either Christian or un-Christian, but only to examine the records in their historical relation one to another. It is almost impossible to tell exactly where the first appearance of Art takes place in the Scriptures, so soon does it seem to come upon the stage after that time when the world itself was without form ; and to rise with misty indistinctness, to the sound of music, in that passage where we are informed that Jubal was the father of those who handled the harp and the organ, and that Tubal Cain was an instructor of the men who worked in brass and iron. Art appears, however, to come forward nearer to the footlights in the naming of Nineveh, which occurs soon after ;

though it is only as yet by association with times long after the one we are now thinking of.

We must first call to mind Abraham's purchase of the cave in the field of Machpelah for a cemetery, and where most probably records of some kind were made of those afterwards buried there ; especially if there be any truth in what is said of him in the Talmud and Koran, namely, that he was the son, not of Terah, but of Azer, and that Azer was sculptor in ordinary, as well as son-in-law, to Nimrod. You all know the legendary story of his breaking up his father's images, declaring in ridicule that a superior god had done the mischief, and of Abraham's being so converted to the true God. All this, however, we may believe or not, as we please ; if we took any view of the question we would rather believe in the other story, that he was originally a worshipper of the heavenly bodies, until he found them all in their turn setting below the horizon, and declared he would have nothing to do with gods who disappeared ; and was so induced to take a step in the right direction.

We must pass on to meet Rebekah at the well, where we shall find Abraham's servant putting earrings and bracelets of gold on her as a token that she was engaged to Isaac for a wife : that same Rebekah who helped to deceive her husband in his blind old age. From hence, too, we must hurry on to Jacob, not as yet troubled with his children, but setting up the stone on end on which his head had lain when he dreamed his dream, and pouring oil upon it as a memorial that he would henceforth give to the Lord a tenth of all he possessed. As we again travel on, we find Rachel stealing the gods of her father Laban, and hiding them under the saddle furniture : of course her poor husband Jacob was accused of the theft, but the real robber

was identified. We might almost say that we could identify the stolen property, so many have we of these portable images in our Museum. Our collection is supposed to be, however, chiefly, if not entirely, Egyptian, and these of poor Rachel were most probably either Babylonish or Assyrian. Travelling was slow in those days, and communication between one people and another difficult, so that we can only guess at the matter ; but the passage here referred to, as well as many others, serves to prove that the habit of carrying about these portable gods or charms was almost universal among the eastern nations. That it continued so for many years after, we know—far beyond even the days of our Saviour. Mohammed, six hundred years later than the time of Christ, found the countries full of them, each tribe having its peculiar set of deities : Mecca and Medina abounded with them. His efforts seem, in fact, chiefly directed to the suppression of this species of idolatry, and to the establishment of the worship of the one God. That he resorted to imposture in the end, and made use of unjustifiable means to propagate what he considered the true faith, we all know ; but that he was, in the beginning of his career, sincere, no one can doubt, nor can we doubt that he was formed both mentally and bodily for a great leader.

I have travelled a long way over the desert, so will make use of my return ticket, and go back to the place from whence I came. The line of communication is complete from end to end, as we shall see ; for we find the tribe of Hamor giving Jacob all the strange gods that were in their hands, and all their earrings, as a witness to the covenant that was between them. Allusions to the continuous existence of idols as objects of worship occur, in fact, in all parts of the Bible. “Wood and stone, the work

of men's hands," is a frequent expression used to describe them ; and the prophet Isaiah may be said to condense the feeling against the system in those verses of the 44th chapter in which he says : " With part thereof he warmeth himself, and the residue thereof he maketh a god." The verses are too long for me to quote, but they may be read with some advantage by the student in Art.

But we must get on, though I cannot do so without just a passing glance at Joseph's coat of many colours, as it is the first allusion to woven Art mentioned in the Bible ; and you know well how famous the people of the East were, and are now, for their taste in that sort of fabric, and for their harmonious mixing of their colours.

We have now to pass through a very long period, more than four hundred years ; that being the time that had elapsed between the coming up into Egypt of Joseph's brethren to buy corn, when he asked of them, " Is the old man yet alive of whom ye spake ? " and their going out, a long line of countless numbers, with their wives, their sons and daughters, their flocks and herds, and all their goods and chattels about them, laden too with the gold and silver spoil of their masters, whom they had made jealous by their increasing wealth and superior industry and ability in the Arts. That their task was hard during their sojourn in the strange country, there is no doubt ; it is evidenced not only by the records in the Bible, but by the enormous structures still found belonging to ancient Egypt, many of which are, in all probability, by their hands. The Jews in the present day, in fact, assert that the Pyramids were built by them, founding their belief on the statement made to that effect by their historian, Josephus. We must not, however, imagine that they

were all engaged like slaves, under one hard master, in brick-making, though a labour-tax was put upon them to a severe extent, heavier, perhaps, than upon the other native tribes ; yet they held together then, as they do now, by ties of relationship and by laws peculiar to themselves, which not only made those ties closer, but separated them more exclusively from those around, and thus even in their bondage they became a great and united people. They had lost, to a certain extent, the character of their forefathers, the shepherd-kings, and become masters of many trades, designers of elaborate patterns, workers in fine gold and silver, and weavers of rich cloths. If the primitive simplicity of the old patriarchs was less prominent in them, they had come back out of the strange country ingenious men, with a practical knowledge and feeling for the Arts, which they had gained during their hard apprenticeship. This we shall perceive in their journey through the wilderness, whither we must now follow them. We arrive at nothing that concerns the subject of our lecture, the Arts of the Israelites, until we come to the 20th chapter of Exodus, where, as you know, are recorded the ten commandments ; I need not, I am sure, repeat them ; you will recollect immediately that the words, "graven image," are used in the second ; words which, however wide may be the range of their meaning, imply undeniably the knowledge of certain modes of working in Sculpture. They, the people, were forbidden to make or worship them, and in these words may, perhaps, be found the reason why they were never, as far as we know, so great in Art as their more superstitious neighbours ; and it will occur to you immediately how necessary this law must have been to a people, the mass of them in the most ignorant, degraded state, in order to prevent their returning to that

idolatry among which they had been born and bred. They had seen the gorgeous temples of the Egyptians, had gazed upon their colossal deities, and listened, perhaps, to the voice of the vocal Memnon mingling with their evening hymn as they floated down the Nile; and they had witnessed, if not partaken of, their religion, to them far more impressive than the comparatively unostentatious one they were called upon to follow. Can it be wondered at that they often murmured at the change, and fell back into the old error?

The prohibition of the graven image referred more, however, to the worshipping than the making of it, for we find them possessing an Art of their own that aided them in their religious ceremonies and was not considered in contradiction to existing laws and regulations. The Holy Ark, for instance, a distinct description of which is given in the Pentateuch;—but I am going too fast. The necessity of forbidding the imitation of everything that is in the heaven above, the earth beneath, and the waters under the earth, as leading them back more particularly to idolatry, will appear, when we recollect the numberless copies of animated nature introduced into the religion of the country out of which they had just emerged.

The caution implied in this second command is reiterated soon after by a prohibition of the making of gods of gold and silver, which must, I think, have had reference, from the excessive value of these metals, to small pocket deities such as I have before alluded to, though that the Egyptians were acquainted with the method of covering other materials with them we have existing evidence. There are wooden life-size figures of Egyptian work in our Museum which still show that they were originally covered with gold. That the Israelites

had at that time much of Art, as well as wealth, among them, and that they used that Art in the service of their religion is seen soon after by the directions Moses gives for the making of the ark. He tells them to take of gold, silver, and brass, of blue, purple, scarlet, and fine linen, and to use onyx and other stones; desires them to make it of shittim wood, and to cover it within and without with gold, and to make a crown of gold about it. He gives the size and pattern of it; orders the casting of gold rings, and staves overlaid with gold for the carrying of it; directs that two cherubim of beaten gold be placed one on each side with their faces looking to the mercy-seat in the centre, and their wings stretched over and towards it.

Various other directions of a like kind are given for the making of the candlesticks, the table for the shew-bread, &c. Debates may now arise as to the exact designs indicated by these directions, but all will agree that they show neither want of taste and power to carry them out, nor want of material to execute them in. These directions too show that the practice of weaving cloth into fine patterns was known among them, for the curtains of the tabernacle are ordered to be made with "cherubim of cunning work" upon them. The rules laid down for all these matters are very strict as well as voluminous, and highly interesting to the artist. These full directions respecting the tabernacle are followed by equally implicit regulations for the style and fashion of the priests' dresses, and they who are to construct them are designated by a word which we have translated wise-hearted and filled with the spirit of wisdom; inventive geniuses, perhaps, we should now call them.

The first who is named as celebrated for his cleverness is

Bezaleel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, and he is described by the usual terms, as filled with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and as a worker in metals, in cutting of stones, and in wood carving; and another name comes immediately after as a sort of assistant, Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, and he is complimented in the same manner: perhaps he was the one who really did the work, though the other got the credit.

This love and knowledge of Art begins to display itself soon after, though not quite in the right way, for we find the multitude going astray in consequence of Moses's absence, and making to themselves a golden calf. There is an apparent inconsistency in the description of it, whether arising from translation into another tongue I cannot tell; it is one, however, which may, I think, without difficulty, be reconciled: perhaps in the new translation which we are to have it may be set right. In the first part, Aaron is described as ordering the children of Israel to break off the golden earrings in their wives' ears, and he is then said to have made a molten calf of them, and afterwards fashioned it with a graving tool; later in the chapter he says, "I cast it into the fire and there came out this calf;" this, taken literally, means of course a figure cast in gold and finished by the chasing tool; if so, we may pronounce it without much doubt to have been of small dimensions, and we may readily imagine it to have been not unlike the Egyptian Apis, or sacred bull, to the worship of which it was, in fact, a return. Soon after comes the verse relating the manner in which Moses destroyed the molten calf. I will quote it to you: "And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strawed it upon the water, and made



the children of Israel drink of it." No miracle is, so far as I know, implied; so I may say without offence that I think it would be a difficult thing to burn a molten image in the fire, still more difficult to grind it to powder, and even yet more difficult to scatter it upon the water, to say nothing of the poor sinners being made to drink it at the end of the story; at all events, it is a most roundabout way of putting an end to the thing. All these difficulties vanish, however, and the whole becomes more consistent, by our supposing that the statue was a wooden one, covered with gold-leaf; it might then easily be burnt in the fire, and the ashes be strawed upon the waters; it might, too, have been colossal, like most of the deities they had left behind them. And we may add yet another reason for our belief that this is the right solution: the wanderers were scarcely yet sufficiently stationary to admit of the process of casting being carried on on a large scale, and that the covering of wood with gold was a method used in their Sculpture I have already shown you by allusion to instances in our Museum. The Koran says that the calf was made to bellow, but we have nothing to do with that; the evidence is not worth attending to.

All the directions for the making of the tabernacle are again given when the covenant is renewed, perhaps more explicitly than at first, and the enthusiasm of the people is shown by their bringing more riches to the work than was required, and the names of Bezaleel and Aholiab are repeated more than once; so that they must have been very eminent in their calling. That their work was valuable, we may not unreasonably infer from the circumstance that particular persons are afterwards appointed to take care of it. The Book of Leviticus contains

little to our purpose, though the prohibition of making images is repeated here and there, and stone and wood are again mentioned as the material. The term, "standing image," too is used to distinguish, I presume, the fixed or larger figure from the smaller portable ones. All these warnings, coupled ever and anon with an appeal to their remembrances of what had been done for them, appear to me as so much evidence of the still existing idolatry among the tribes, carried on privately, perhaps, but yet very common.

There is a hint to young painters in the Book of Numbers, where Moses decrees to the people that they put fringes on their garments with a ribbon of blue in them. It will teach artists to do the same in their pictures, when representing subjects that have to do with them.

The brazen serpent in the wilderness we may pass over, for the reason that, beyond the statement that it was a brazen serpent on a pole, we have no description of it. The practice of putting it on a cross, resorted to in modern Art, is, of course, a following out the notion that it was typical of Christ, but has no real foundation beyond that.

In the Book of Joshua, more of a general and less of a statesman than Moses, we find but little to notice. War prevailed throughout his time, and war did then, as it does now, interrupt Art and other intellectual pursuits. In Judges, again, allusions to it are few and far between, nor is it to be expected that they should be otherwise in the records of a newly-formed nation, when long periods of time are marked merely by the assertion that So-and-so judged Israel and slept with his forefathers. Yet, even here, we may pick up a few stray crumbs of information. In Deborah's song, for instance, mention is made of

garments of divers colours of needlework on both sides, showing that the patterns were worked in the warp and the woof, and not merely dyed on the surface.

In the books of Numbers, Judges, Samuel, &c., we may say that Art only crops up here and there on the surface. We have repetitions of the word idols, and allusions, again, to richly-woven garments. The Philistine image, Dagon, is brought up and declared to have mysteriously fallen down and been broken before the Ark, but nothing is given by which we can judge of its shape and character.

The rebellion of David's children against him, his having a heavy crown of gold and precious stones put upon his head, and his other troubles are recorded. The times were out of joint, and Art sank into the background.

We read of nothing of importance until we come to the 1st Kings and the time of Solomon, who, declaring that the Lord his God had given him rest, and that there was "neither adversary nor evil occurrent," began the building of the Temple. There is a verse just previous to the account of his work that seems to indicate him as a great naturalist; it says, "He spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall; he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes. And there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon." I have quoted this because I think that, in the description of the decorations of the Temple, we shall find the taste of the great naturalist carried out. It is true that in all very primitive Art the natural objects belonging to the country immediately about it, are introduced; but this feature seems to have been particularly strong in this first Temple. First comes in the name

of Hiram, who undertakes to import for Solomon all the materials for the building—the cedars and other timbers—and to bring them down from Lebanon to the sea, in exchange for wheat and oil. We have then the number of men employed, and a regular plan of the building follows, and a statement that every stone was worked away from the edifice, so that no noise was caused by the constructing. Mention is made of stones, costly from their enormous size; and I think we all know of what immense blocks the walls and substructure of Jerusalem are found to consist.

All this, however, is too long for me to trouble you with, though it may not be uninteresting to you to study, as a tolerable idea may be formed of the whole. Our business is more with the decorations; so we may go on to say that the oracle was carved with knops and open flowers entirely of cedar, so that no stone was seen, and completely covered with gold; and that within this oracle stood two cherubim of olive-tree, each ten cubits high, with wings five cubits long. We get, too, at the size of the chambers by these cherubim, as it is said their wings touched the end of the wall, and met together in the middle of the house. Then comes the mention of carved palm-trees, and again of open flowers. Gold seems to have been spread everywhere, even on the floors—a sure sign of a barbarous style of Art, where richness of material is substituted for excellence of execution—and at the end of the story comes a record of the time occupied by the work (seven years).

After the building of the Temple, we read of the building of Solomon's own house; and here is introduced the name of Hiram—whether the same as before mentioned, I cannot tell. He is here called a widow's son, of the tribe of Naphtali, and

his father was a man of Tyre. He is described, like the other clever artists, as filled with wisdom and understanding, and cunning to work all works in brass ; and the result of his genius is enumerated—pillars of brass and chapiters of the same, decorated with pomegranates, chain-work, lily-work, and other fanciful ornaments. He is said to have made for Solomon a molten sea—a metal fountain would be the proper term—that stood on twelve oxen, with all their hinder parts set inwards, similar to the fountains of lions in the Alhambra.

In the Second Book of Chronicles the description of the building of the Temple is again recorded, and further details are given well worth studying. David is said to have handed down the design of it to his son Solomon, and to have given particular directions as to the building of the porch, before his death. The riches and labour that were lavished on the Temple seem to have taxed the people heavily, for after the death of Solomon we find them complaining to his son Rehoboam, and asking him to lighten their burdens, and the old men of his father's court advising his doing so.

All this, however, I need not trouble you with ; it will be sufficient if I say that a long series of divisions, partly political and partly religious in their character, ensued—politics and religion were, in fact, so mixed up together as to render it almost impossible to separate them ; a contention took place between the worship of the true God and idolatry, under the name of Baal and other deities, without either prevailing in any great degree or for any length of years. This will strike you as less surprising if you think for a moment.

Idolatry, or the requiring of a tangible object to bow down to, is the first effort at acknowledging a superior Power. Man

in a savage state apprehends the existence of a something which rules his destiny, and to which he is subservient in spite of himself; but is incapable of conceiving that something as either omnipresent or invisible: he endeavours, therefore, to satisfy a difficulty thus created in his uneducated mind as to the personification of a Power, by symbolizing it in some way or other, according to the good or evil notions he has formed of it.

The Israelites symbolized all their false deities, as did every other early nation; and—though we are not likely to turn to that feeling in Art again—it had one good effect: it kept it from the literal, the individual, and the commonplace, which in Sculpture are ever more or less detrimental to success. There may be some exceptions to this, but I believe the observation is, in the main, correct. To proceed: we have nothing particularly interesting before the first captivity, when “Wept the captive Jews by Babel’s waters, still remembering Zion;” nor have we much record of them during their 536 years of slavery—still less of either their Art or that of their masters. Babylon is a flat country, and the buildings were made of bricks, and the walls covered with plaster; so that not only the buildings themselves, but the sculptures upon them, have been less durable, and consequently less handed down to us. There is a small stone in the British Museum, however—apparently a black basalt—of a very interesting character, covered with hieroglyphics which record an agreement for the purchase of a field. How many times do we, in the Scriptures, come upon a legal document of this sort—a stone put up as witness to a covenant between men! It seems, in fact, to have been the earliest method used among all these Eastern nations

of certifying to their rights in landed property—not always, as you may suppose, very accurately marked down. I am obliged, for want of time, to pass over, in this hasty sketch, many books where little or no allusion to Art takes place. The line and plummet are mentioned, it is true, in Job ; but it can hardly be expected that much reference should be made to Art in this, perhaps the greatest of all poetical productions—it deals too much in the higher sublimities of Nature for that ; but I may advise the student, if he wishes to enlarge his mind, to devote serious attention to the grand imagery as well as the pure philosophy it contains. He will be the better for it, both in his Art and otherwise. It formed, indeed, as you know, the subject for illustration to one of the most imaginative artists of this country—Blake—who was himself a philosopher and a poet, and consistent in all he did with what he designed on paper or taught in verse ; though, strange to say, he seemed all his life to walk on that narrow ridge which divides genius from insanity, without ever exactly stepping off on the wrong side. In Isaiah we come, however, upon more solid ground, where we find the first reference to the second captivity and to Assyrian Art ; for we have now actual examples from which to judge, and we have arrived more within the real range of true history, sacred and profane. The date of these marbles extends with certainty from 1100 to 700 years B.C., and perhaps with some uncertainty somewhat before and after that period.

I will not ask you as artists to seek in these examples subjects for imitation in your Art, for you have works of a much higher order for that purpose ; but I will ask you to look at them carefully, and say if they are not highly interesting as records of the manners of the people to whom they belong :

they are not even entirely without style, as I hope to show you hereafter. A comparison between them and Egyptian Art seems natural, at the first moment of examining them, from their being coeval with, if not earlier, than most of the latter. The Egyptian is certainly far more refined in its conception as well as in its execution than the Assyrian; its statues are more elegant and more finished—perhaps not more carried out in detail, but worked with a greater feeling for beauty, and I should say with a better knowledge of internal form; the Egyptians, too, deal more in higher subjects, their deities and supernatural beings. There seems, however, to have been less attempt at portraying movement than with the Assyrians, whether intentionally or from want of power I will not say; for I have already hinted to you my belief that the grand solemnity of their statues is much dependent on that quiet placidity with which they are invested. I have sometimes, in fact, even thought that the Greeks themselves lost something in their Art, great as it was, by too much variety in treatment and a too liberal representation of action: that they kept closer to the simple, stolid manner of the Egyptians in their more colossal works—like the great Minerva—we all know; and it is a proof that they were aware that simplicity is the very essence of the sublime.

The Assyrian country is a rocky, mountainous one, and hence it is we find large blocks and slabs of marble used in their Sculpture, and that their Art has come down to us in greater quantities and in a more perfect state than that of Babylonia. Quarries were to be found within their own land. If you examine these sculptures you will find them, I think, more literal in their treatment than the Egyptians; they are, in fact, as



literal as the powers of truthful representation then existing admitted ; some personifications of ideal beings, good and bad demons, are given, and the winged circle is shown as emblematical of divine power or eternity. Their human-headed winged bulls, and fish-god, represent, it is said, their deity Nin, and their human-headed winged lion, their god Nergal—personifications, in all probability, like the Egyptian Sphinx, of the combined powers of Nature. But the scenes relate almost wholly to the history and manners of the people themselves ; to their wars, their sieges, and other kinds of attack and defence ; to their triumphal processions and modes of treating their vanquished enemies ; to the ceremonies of their court, to their hunting, and other sports of the higher classes. It may be as well that I should call to your mind that all these carved works, decorations of palaces and temples of enormous size, whose architecture consisted wholly of horizontal and perpendicular lines, were entirely covered with the most brilliant colours, the natural tints of animated objects being imitated as closely as the then knowledge of Art admitted ; it will serve to help you in your conception of their gorgeous effect as a whole, especially under the sunny aspect of the East. They now, perhaps, seem to you flat and confused, especially those where an immense number of minute figures are introduced, and many events portrayed within a comparatively small space ; but you will readily understand that this colouring would not only produce a very brilliant effect as a whole, especially with the strong contrast and abrupt divisions of colour then resorted to, but serve to make distinct much that now appears confused from an over multitude of parts. I may say here that the composition of many of them is not so crude in its character as you would

suppose on first looking at them : some of the representations of their lion-hunts belonging to the later period, the seventh century B.C., show a beauty of line and a variety in grouping that vies with the best Greek Art, and are carried out in a manly style that only wants a little more Art-education to make it perfect. In other cases, as must always be in such very early works, mechanical arrangement, and a too literal gazette-like reading interferes with what I have just stated, and reduces them to dry relations of facts. Yet from this very matter-of-fact manner is derived an interest which would not exist were they more liberally, more poetically treated. You feel more confident that they are historically true, that no liberty has been taken in the recording of events, that they bring before you more faithfully the people : that their physiognomies are more correctly given, their dresses more closely imitated, their habits of life more truthfully shown. You see into the far back of that powerful nation, and understand better their character, and what a powerful warlike people they must have been—might was right at any rate in their day. You can see nothing but war, contention of tribes one with another, besieging of cities, triumphs over the fallen, carrying away of captives, and seizing of spoils. War seems to have been the object of life among the heads of the country, and to toil and slave the sole business of the lower orders.

The recorded history of these countries is faint and indistinct, even with the light thrown upon it by the cuneiform inscriptions now so cleverly translated. Xenophon has some most interesting allusions to them in his *Cyropædia*, but it is to their Sculpture that we must look for an insight into their habits and customs. We find in these marbles the true type of the nation,

very closely resembling—in fact, almost the same as that of the Jews: we have everything that relates to their dress, whether of the higher or lower classes, and we see in these dresses the difference between the king with the small knob at the top of his cap, and his generals and officers of his army in their pointed helmets (one of these helmets is preserved in our Museum, and testifies to the literal copying in these sculptures); we could even construct a chariot and harness a horse with perfect correctness after the pattern given, so accurate are they; and most splendid must they have looked. We can understand how gorgeous were the habiliments of the rich and powerful, with their fringed garments and highly ornamented vestures; and we can feel how mean and neglected were the half-clad slaves with their bands of cloth round their heads, their loins covered with a scanty wrapper, and their backs bare to the lash that is represented as flourishing over them: for the nude with them was not an artistic preference, but a sad reality. We perceive, in fact, what numberless hordes were at the beck and call of one man, and at how little value their lives were held, and we detect at the same time from their very appearance what brute-like, degraded creatures these poor wretches were—men only in shape, and hardly that. We can understand from these reliefs all the modes of warfare resorted to, as well as their implements of offence and defence: we see their shields, some of them high enough to cover the whole man, and so shaped as to stand on the ground and form a complete wall of defence against the arrows of the enemy; we find in them the use of the battering-ram, and we can make out the general character of their walls and fortifications with the moats surrounding them; we see the soldiers swimming across rivers on the blown-out skins of

animals, to attack the fortifications, and we find them throwing their adversaries from the top of the walls, or driving them into the river, where their bodies are shown lying in the water among the horses that have been killed and the fishes that are swimming about. Vultures and ravens are feeding on the dead and dying. We may observe their custom of decapitating their prisoners and throwing down their heads in piles at the gate of the city, or at the feet of the conqueror. Many allusions to this practice are to be found in the Scriptures ; and we may observe these poor captives prostrating themselves before their conquerors and pleading for mercy, or submitting themselves with a fatalistic passiveness to the hand of the executioner.

Representations of high interest are given of the building of their palaces and temples. You can ascertain at once all the appliances they then had for moving the immense stone masses that have been handed down to us. A lever of great length is used, worked by many hands, one attending to the fulcrum below, whilst others are giving their weight and strength at the end. The huge human-headed bull was put on a sledge, and made to travel on to its destination by these means, and by the assistance of numberless slaves who dragged at it by ropes. Planks were placed in front of the ponderous weight in regular succession as it proceeded, and these were greased or oiled in order to make it slide glibly on. Superintendents grease the slaves themselves with the lash, and with no very great amount of reserve, in order to prevent their flagging in their exertions, whilst a leader stands on the colossal figure and directs the whole.

Objects of the vegetable kingdom are very conventionally given, chiefly from ignorance of scientific perspective, and their

rivers are represented by a series of undulating lines, on which are shown fishes in considerable numbers, and often of clearly defined species. Their trees are formally arranged, but sufficiently marked in their shape to enable you to distinguish the sort intended. The palm-tree is very frequent. A line of single trees and figures of men placed in alternate succession between them is made to signify that a battle took place in a wood. A marshy piece of ground is indicated by a multitude of reeds, which, from their want of variety, become in themselves a not unpleasing pattern, and among these, swine with their young, and other animals that frequent such localities, help to carry out the idea.

I have reserved my observations to the last on the relievos representing their hunting-scenes, because in them, as it appears to me, are their highest efforts in Art; they belong, in fact, to the latest period known. Many animals served for the purpose of the chase: wild horses were killed with arrows, or captured with the lasso, and deer were hunted and destroyed by the same means; but the royal amusement was evidently the lion-hunt, and this, not improbably, was reserved as the prerogative of the kings alone. We have the whole system exhibited to us by what I have no hesitation in saying is, in many respects, a very grand style of Art.

Many of you have, I dare say, read of the preserve of tigers laid claim to by Montague Tigg, as director of the Anglo-Bengalee Insurance Company, in "Martin Chuzzlewit," but few of you are, perhaps, aware that a record exists of a real preserve of lions on the east side of Nineveh. Fact is often said to be stranger than fiction, and this might be quoted as an instance of it. At any rate, we can discern that the animals were kept

in huge wooden cages; that they were carried in these cages into the forest, and let out for the purpose of the hunt. We see in more than one of these fine works the slave standing on the top of the cage, and lifting up the trap-door, while the royal beast stalks out with a grandeur of step, with a natural dignity quite his own; these relievos have, in fact, never been surpassed for truthfulness, for a thorough knowledge of the habits of the creature, in any department of Art, either before or since. We may have learned better to portray hair, we may have gained more correct knowledge of anatomy; but these old sculptors had witnessed the scene they represented, had been, perhaps, attendants on the royal chase, had watched the king of the forest as he crept out of his confinement, with his growl of thunder, eager to regain his liberty, and, unconscious of the poor being standing above him to whom he owes his release, or perhaps too much nauseated with *Esclave au naturel* to care much for a repetition of the every-day dish. Alas! poor fellow; he takes but a moment's glance at his native forests, and a moment's hope of freedom is all he is allowed. A king of men is there, an arrow is in his side, and a hideous howl announces that his end is near. And yet he dies like a king. The various ways in which the royal beast is represented succumbing to the attack is a lesson that may be learnt by artists even in these later days. In one instance he is seen with a spear piercing his spine, and his hinder quarters in consequence paralyzed, whilst the foremost half is still roaring defiance at his oppressors. In another he is shown tottering along, still retaining with effort his natural dignity of step, though pierced with numerous points on all sides. You feel that in the next moment he will roll over on the cold earth, never to rise again. In a third, he is shown as

shot right through both eyes, and leaping into the air with both paws extended in a wild, confused manner, the sure prelude to an immediate collapse. In another, again, he is brought gradually to the ground, and vomiting forth blood from his mouth—an unmistakable sign that the enemy Death has broken through the fortress of life, and that all is over. Every beast not only dies naturally, but dies according to the manner in which he is slain. Slaves are represented as carrying home the victim, six or eight to each carcase, and returning with their mules laden with ropes, traps, and other instruments of the chase.

I had intended in this lecture to have gone more completely through the Bible, but time prevents me. Perhaps I may have induced you to search into it for yourselves ; if so, my object will have been attained. I have too, in my path, tripped my foot against these stones of Assyria, lying in the sands, and found them of too much interest and to contain too much practical instruction to be passed by in haste. I would say to you, Look well at them. And now you will ask me what has been my purport in pointing out their peculiarities, what benefit has it been to your Art ; what, in short, is the moral of my tale ? It is this :—If you would have your work valued hereafter, you must have in it no borrowed imagery, no emblems connected with foreign lands or past days : but let it run side by side with the history of your own country, and with the manners of the times in which you live. You must make of it a mirror of the thoughts and feelings of the day to which it belongs. I will give you my meaning from that passage in the book we have just been glancing into, where Joshua desires each man to take up a stone and place it in a heap as a memorial of their passing

over Jordan, and says to them : " That this may be a sign among you, that when your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean ye by these stones ? then ye shall be able to answer them."





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